MYTHS AND RITUALS SURROUNDING DELINQUENT GANGS IN EDINBURGH AND DUNDEE.

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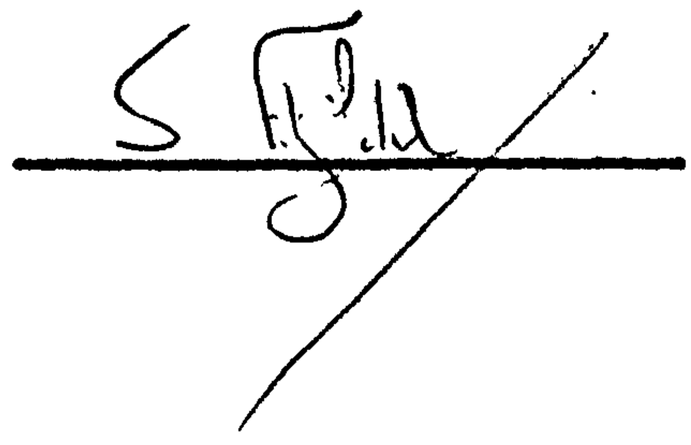

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Abstract.

At the time of this research (1971-73), the 'problem' of group violence had become an area of public concern in Edinburgh and Dundee. The Media and the Courts, as well as those agencies involved in working with young people, tended to put forward an interpretation based on the 'gang' as a structured phenomenon.

However, work in the field suggested that this explanation over-simplified the issues involved and that 'ganging' could only be adequately described if it were placed in a social context rather wider than that suggested by any of the contemporary areas of deviancy theory. In short, a brief outline of the 'development' of theories of deviance suggests the need for a 'cultural' explanation rather than a more limited view based variously on infraction, a 'search for differences', the phenomenon, social reaction or a class analysis.

Having suggested the need for a 'cultural' explanation, a discussion of some of the major views of 'culture' (especially Marxist and Structural-Functionalist) reveals a tendency towards mutual exclusion, with an emphasis in the former on 'conflict' and in the latter on 'consensus'. Neither seems adequately to approach the central issues of unity and diversity in contemporary British Society. A heuristic and exploratory approach to 'culture' is required which allows for man's ability to adapt to, and sometimes transcend, inequality and 'repression', while at the same time remaining in some way a 'member' of the total society.

Briefly, the suggestion is that this problematic can only be resolved, albeit in a tentative fashion, by the 'rediscovery' of the centrality of the symbol in 'cultural' studies. A greater emphasis is required on the ways in which symbolic adaptations 'defuse' and adapt 'contradictions' in the material circumstance and also on the complex ways in which 'key' values disseminate a symbolic 'togetherness'.

Again, although these concepts are exploratory, requiring refinement and validation in the field, a discussion of 'ganging' takes place in terms of a contemporary view of adolescence and the primacy of symbolic structures in that 'liminal' period. It is suggested that such a view of 'ganging' as symbolic structure is more informative than an interpretation based on a 'myopic' view of infraction and deviancy without reference to a 'cultural' context.

Introduction.

In 1972-3, 'ganging' was an area of considerable public concern in at least three Scottish Cities, including Glasgow. The extent of the national interest in the 'problem' and its 'newsworthiness' was revealed by the Observer's publication in February 1973 of extracts from James Patrick's[1.] account of his research into Glasgow Gangs under such sensational headlines as 'A Night with the Razors Out'.[2.]

On a local level, throughout the period of my research in Edinburgh (November 1971-September 1972), the Press waged a campaign against 'ganging' in particular, and teenage misbehaviour in general. Invariably, incidents which could be defined as 'gang events' were given eye-catching and sensational headlines, no matter how trivial their content. The overall effect was to create the impression that the incidence of group violence was more common, and more severe, then it actually was.

Thus, in a story headlined in the Edinburgh Evening News (March 10th. 1972) -

"£25 Fine on Gang Youth"

- an incident of window-smashing was elaborated into a potential clash of rival 'gangs'. The youth in question claimed that another group was out 'to get him', hence the need to arm himself with 'an evil-sounding weapon 17 inches long'. The Sheriff gave credibility to this version of the incident, suggesting that '..There seems to be some kind of trouble brewing' - no doubt thus reinforcing the boy's interpretation and alarming the general populace at the same time.

In another case, (Evening News; April 17th. 1973; later, but a good example of this type of press coverage) a relatively minor incident was transformed by the Police, Courts and Press into a 'gang' event.

"Stick Gang Paraded in Street."

Here, a 'gang' of youths, one with a 'symbolic' white stick, were simply 'parading' in the road. Their noisy presence was sufficient for the police to pursue them whereupon one of their number shouted abuse with the inevitable outcome a fine.

1. James Patrick; A Glasgow Gang Observed; Eyre Methuen; 1973.
2. Observer Review; 4th. Feb. 1973.

However, whatever the real dangers of this 'breach of the peace', the significance of the reporting is that both press and courts seemed bent on defining the defendant and the event in 'gang' terms, as part of the process of determining guilt. This eagerness was not shared by the accused in the above case, labelled by the prosecutor as....

> "...a prominent member of one such gang and is always well to the fore in gang fights and all activities of the local gangs."

Another incident, (March 9th. 1972, Evening News), resulting in fines on two youths, again for 'breach of the peace', was noticeable for the emphasis placed on the gang definition of the offense. The two 16 year old youths were arrested, not for being 'noisy', but for a 'provocative gang song' that frightened women shoppers.

Again, the screaming headline of March 7th. 1972 - 'Jungle Cries in City Streets' - turned out to be a disordered, chaotic 'milling about' in the centre of Edinburgh with, of course, 'shouts of gang slogans', resulting in the inevitable charges of 'breach of the peace.' In fact, this 'breach of the peace' had quite serious consequences for one of the boys - he was jailed for sixty days.

On the other hand, there were serious incidents as well as these more trivial offenses rendered more alarming and worthy of public attention by their 'gang' connotations. In April 1972, the Evening News announced on the front page:

> "Gang at Terror Stabbing."

Basically, for the public, this was written up as an attempt by six 'members' of the 'Niddrie Terror' to 'mug' a postman - he was stabbed five times. Our interest is not in the offence but in the persistent attempts by the Solicitor-General to impose a 'gang' definition on the incident and, most significantly, the defendants. Presumably, 'gang membership' made the crime more 'serious' and 'guilt' more obvious.

> "Do the words 'Niddrie Terror' mean anything to you?..... Are any of the people you were with members of it?..... What was the purpose of shouting, 'Niddrie Terror'?"

The culmination of these and other stories was a campaign mounted in August 1972 (again in the News) against 'The Wreckers.' All citizens were requested by the Lord Provost to 'support the police in a new drive against vandalism.' The reason for the campaign was quite simple.

> "Recent gang disturbances and the increase of painted slogans on buildings throughout the city have strengthened the determination of the police to hit- and hit hard - at those responsible." (My emphasis)

A second report declared the determination of the 'people' to do something about the situation. The News announced:

> "Tenants Fight Gang Menace."

Not surprisingly in this climate of public 'action', there was talk of 'petitions' and 'vigilante duty to try and combat the gangs of youths who hang around.'

In Dundee (October 1972-August 1973), a similar situation prevailed with the media orchestrating a clamourvfor 'action' against young 'hooligans'. The Dundee Evening Telegraph (June 8th. 1973), for example, was sure that it had the answer to the problems of 'hooliganism.'

> "But there is an answer. That is the discipline of young offenders' institutions, or so we must hope."

Indeed, if anything, the Dundee Press and Courts tended to be more specific, using 'gang' names in a way that put the existence of organised groups of marauding teenagers above question. Thus, in the aftermath of 'the Battle of Albert Square', an infamous local incident that made the headlines several times over a period of weeks, the 'gang' definition of the incident is obvious. (Evening Telegraph: June 7th. 1973)

> "Sheriff Christie, dealing to-day with the Hilltown Huns and Lochee Fleet gang members, who took part in a bottle fight in Albert Square, Dundee, said the whole episode was disgraceful."

One of his judicial colleagues went even further and in a locally famous (or infamous) case, asserted the necessity for all magistrates to pay attention to his 'pocket glossary of gang colours', a useful aid in determining 'gang' membership - and guilt.

> "When a Dundee youth appeared at the Burgh Court to-day, wearing a brown jersey with yellow stripes, Bailie J.L. Stewart produced a pocket glossary of Dundee Gang colours." (Dundee Evening Telegraph: April 28th. 1973)

In fact, the youth in question denied that he was a 'member' of any 'gang' but to no avail; Bailie Stewart declared that "the youth's jersey marked him as a member of the 'Ardler Pak'." Moreover, he went on to exhort parents to have a good look in their children's wardrobes just in case their child was a secret 'member' of a local 'gang'.

While it is not suggested that these incidents are fabrications by the Press or the Courts, it is pointed out that the treatment of often minor offences in terms of structured 'gangs' with membership and 'uniforms', tended to convey a picture of organisation to the public and to the boys themselves. The police, parents and courts accepted these explanations of violence and rowdyism too readily, while accounts of court proceedings seemed to indicate some pressure on offenders to conform to this 'official' gang image.

On the other hand, from the viewpoint of the 'authorities', such an explanation seems far easier to grasp, more readily comprehensible, than the suggestions to be made here - that 'gangs' are complex phenomena, serving a more subtle purpose, than can be revealed by an over-eagerness to 'structure' incidents as evidence of a 'gang problem.' This recommendation of scepticism is borne out by an example of what I shall call the 'verbal reality' of the 'gang'. Briefly, this is the tendency for young people living in the areas where the phenomenon seems strongest to put forward an 'image' of structure, without any attempt to measure that 'image' against the 'gang' as <u>action</u>. Thus Gerry, from the Harrytown estate in Edinburgh, was able to reel off the following list of 'gangs' without any hesitation and great conviction. From one point of view, this would seem a useful indicator of the prevalance of 'gangs' in the city. On the other hand, if this extensive list is regarded as a collection of 'gang' <u>names</u> rather than identifiable units, a crucial distinction is made. The one exists as part of a <u>verbal</u> framework encompassing the city, the other as a structure rooted in <u>action</u>.

Shams
Corrie Jungle
Clerrie "
Gorgie "
Longstone "
Sighthill "
Y.B.T. (Three Teams)
Bar-Ox
Bar-Ox Young Team
Derry
Niddrie Terror
Young Terror
Young Leith Team
Mental Drylaw
Skerrie
Young Gillie
Mental Jungle
Mid-Calder Team

However, having tentatively indicated the sceptical approach this paper will take to the issue of 'ganging', as well as the considerable public concern existing at the time of research in both Edinburgh and Dundee, it is also appropriate to introduce one or two wider areas to be elaborated in later chapters.

First, and most important, it is not suggested that 'ganging' is

a 'myth' in the trivial sense of the word, i.e. non-existent. Rather it will be suggested that the phenomenon must be related to the material conditions existing in the areas studied and to the wider structures of contemporary British Society. In a sentence, 'ganging' will be interpreted essentially as an attempt by those adolescents involved to create meaning in a hostile and undemanding, if not positively depriving, environment. The phenomenon is in some ways an attempt, albeit temporary, to appropriate the limited material available and convert it into an essentially symbolic adaptation 'transforming' powerlessness into 'power' - even if that 'power' is largely illusory.

In a sense, the subject matter of this thesis is meaning and not only in the limited sense of the adaptation known as 'ganging'. 'Meaning' exists not only for the subject but also for the theorist; it is the way in which we come to terms with, and transcend, 'reality'. Thus, for the boys, 'reality' is monotonous, harsh and potentially determining, but, by exercising creativity, they are able to transform and, to a limited extent, transcend it.

The problem for the theorist, on the other hand, is to create meaning on another level, primarily in the sense of understanding rather than, as for the boys, in some kind of purposeful adaptation to the situation. However, though this distinction may seem obvious, it has not necessarily been accepted by all those engaged in social research. In some quarters, there has been a tendency to enter the field with a certain degree of what, for the want of a better word, I shall call 'commitment', which, unfortunately, has on occasions become tangled with 'objectivity' to result in 'idealism' and 'dogma'.

This trend parallels to some extent the 'rediscovery' of inequality in contemporary British Society; inequality which never really disappeared but was temporarily submerged from view by the enthusiasm of the 'End of Ideology' theorists of the 1960's. For some, the 'rediscovery' of the inequality structured into our society has become almost a 'political' end, showing in their work and, when taken to extremes, resulting in the refusal to accept as meaningful anything that is, only that that should be. More 'conventional' work is seen as 'conservative' and part of the ideological control patterns of the 'ruling class'.[1]

1. I. Taylor, P. Walton & J. Young (Eds.): Critical Criminology: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 1975.

The following chapters do not intend to become involved in the current debate on the ideological nature, or otherwise, of the social sciences. However, this does not mean that the issue can be totally passed over; some kind of position statement must be made, however inadequate.

Briefly, ultimately theory always stands in danger of becoming 'ideology', even when aiming for 'objectivity' - a far more difficult target than is often supposed, when even language can be attacked as a reflection and mediation of the prevailing hegemonic relations.[1] What we say or do not say can reveal a great deal about the current structures of power and our own position in those structures.

My initial position is quite simple, that is, the acceptance of the presence of inequality in society without this being transformed into an 'ideological' statement of 'right' or 'wrong'. Such an extension can overstep the limits of intuitive research and lead to a one-sided pursuance of 'equality', reflected in theoretical imbalance.

In this paper, there will be more emphasis on the complexity of a basically unequal, but apparently 'stable', British society, on the ways in which 'repressed' sections of the population <u>create</u> an appearance of 'consensus' out of inequality and exploitation. To use a much maligned term, the 'functional' nature of the adaptations present in areas of positive deprivation and disadvantage (as in this research) must be accepted as 'reality', not relegated to the level of a distortion of 'consciousness' created by the ruling classes' abuse of their power. Far more emphasis must be given to the complex dialectical relationship between man, his immediate material situation and the total structures of society. In turn, less emphasis should be placed on 'degrading' terms such as 'lack of consciousness' or 'false consciousness', which deny the 'freedom', imagination, <u>and</u> 'humanity' of the objectively 'repressed' and relegate the study of the symbolic to the level of trivia.

On the contrary, it will be suggested that the seeming 'stability' of contemporary British society can only be unravelled and understood (at least partially) if the symbolic is restored to its central position as not only a means of disseminating some kind of 'consensus' throughout society, of maintaining 'stability', but also as a way

1. For example see: <u>Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies</u>, University of Birmingham: Stencilled Occ. Papers: Media Series.

of adapting to inequality in a meaningful, purposeful manner, as, for example, in the case of 'ganging'.

In short, there is a need to avoid the 'commitment' that has become fashionable in some quarters and instead seek to elaborate the processes by which individuals and groups make sense of material situations that are objectively depriving and potentially alienating. To this end, the emphasis must be on returning 'creativity' to the individual and the 'oppressed' classes with a concentration on the meaning that <u>they</u> give to the structures that the sociologist may see as overbearing and 'unjust'.

In pursuit of these aims, it is not claimed that this thesis is anything other than heuristic and exploratory. Rather than being definitive, it is simply an attempt to provide a more valid 'explanation' of the 'gang' than is currently provided by either the boys, the media, or the authorities. Ultimately, 'ganging' can be seen as an attempt, however limited and unsuccessful, to give <u>meaning</u> to a social context that is at best depressing and at worst depriving. While the lads may not have succeeded in overcoming the realities of unemployment and the anonymity of the large council housing schemes, the 'gangs' at least provide an 'alternative', albeit symbolic, to monotony and alienation.

CHAPTER ONE.

THE AREAS.

The Introduction has implied the importance of 'meaning' as a theoretical concern and also the need for a heuristic rather than a definitive approach to the subject matter of this thesis. In short, in many ways the research undertaken and the theoretical conclusions drawn from it are exploratory and will require further investigation and elaboration.

Such research of course places special responsibilities and limitations on the researcher. Of these, perhaps the most important is the need to convey to the reader as broad an impression as possible of the way research was conducted and information gathered so that he might, hopefully, draw similar conclusions to those reached in this paper. A further point is the emphasis on 'material' conditions as in a dialectical relationship with symbolic structures.

With this in mind, it becomes important to provide an adequate description not only of method[1], but also of the areas studied,[2] and the subjects.[3] Ideally, through this description, the reader should be able to 'feel' what it was like to live in Barrackhill or Ferry Bank in 1971/2 and 1972/3 respectively. Unfortunately, this degree of empathy calls for a far higher standard of creative writing than I am capable of providing. My priority will therefore be to build up as complete a picture as possible of the development, population, housing, employment patterns and social/leisure facilities in the four areas studied.

An immediate dilemma worth pointing out was the need for a choice between portraits of the individual areas or a discussion under topic headings, e.g. population etc. My choice has been the former, mainly because this suits the emphasis of the thesis more exactly and also because it would seem to provide a clearer impression for the reader. However, a comparative view of the areas is not abandoned completely and will be introduced where appropriate.

A major omission is that of education. Unfortunately, adequate information on the type of schools in the areas, the quality of teaching,

1. See the Appendix for further detail on the method.
2. Fictional names are used throughout to preserve anonymity and prevent possible future additional stigmatisation.
3. See the Appendix for general information on the subjects and some brief biographies of 'key' respondents.

the examination pass rate, social characteristics of the teachers, and so on, was not available. However, it is hoped that, notwithstanding this deficiency, a fairly clear picture of the characteristics of the areas can be developed. But, before launching into the main flow of description, a cautionary statement must be made about the nature of the statistics used in this chapter.

Statistics.

Most statistics are from the 1971 Census at Ward level. Though not corresponding exactly with the areas studied, the Wards do approximate reasonably enough to provide adequate information. If anything, their bias is towards an upgrading of the social characteristics of the areas by, for example, including owner-occupiers where my emphasis was on rented accommodation, either private or council, but mainly council. However, generally, the statistics confirm personal recordings.

Again, it must be recognised that material conditions can change over fairly short periods of time. Thus the 1971 figures could inadequately reflect conditions in later years. However, my research was undertaken in Edinburgh mainly between November 1971 and September 1972, reasonably close to the April 1971 date that the census information was gathered on. In Dundee, research was between October 1972 and August 1973, again not too far removed in time from the Census.

It is in the area of employment rather than housing and population that the reliance on Census figures is most suspect, since employment statistics do have a tendency to rise and fall with different economic conditions and varying government policies. However, when attempting to provide employment information on areas such as Wards and Enumeration Districts, there is no other readily available source but the Census.[1] Moreover, city-wide official statistics do not reveal the uneven situation within the city, part of the priority of this chapter.

While it cannot be suggested that the April 1971 Census figures give us an accurate impression of actual unemployment in, for example, even November 1971, it is fair to suggest that the relative position of April 1971 revealed by the Census will continue to apply in later years, for example, Barrackhill will continue to suffer relatively

1. Department of Employment statistics are gathered on an Employment Office area basis only. Figures for smaller areas were not available. The Office areas in no way overlapped the study areas and their figures were of little use.

high levels of unemployment because of its strong working class characteristics and poor employment opportunities.

Thus, the Report by the Director, S.E. of Scotland Development Authority,[1] confirmed the 'enforced' reliance on Census information for the differential impact of unemployment and found that it correlated satisfactorily with the Department of Employment records, allowing for certain differences in basic information, in particular, the fact that the Census tends to show up more unemployment. However, it must be pointed out that male unemployment was more easily compared using the two kinds of information than female unemployment. The Census tends to show up far more female unemployment than the official figures for two main reasons. First, a large number of women pay only the reduced rate stamp and so do not bother to register as unemployed since they are not entitled to benefit. Secondly, a substantial number of women are very selective about the type of job they will take; they do not go through the Department of Employment machine, preferring to wait for the suitable job, hence they do not appear in the statistics.

In summary, with regard to employment, it can be suggested that the Census figures, if treated with a little respect, can be used to show the relative positions of the areas at April 1971. Further, it is not unreasonable to expect that these patterns of employment will continue to operate unless there are dramatic changes in the characteristics of the areas, for example, a sudden influx of skilled labour or a new industrial development. Thus, as national official figures improve or deteriorate, it can be expected that the areas will follow these trends, while maintaining their relative positions to the city and to each other.

Of course, population and housing characteristics do not change quite so rapidly and the Census may be regarded with somewhat more confidence here, especially in view of the proximity of the main body of the research to the Census date. However, the Census is not the sole source of information; various reports of the time undertaken by official and semi-official bodies are also used to supplement the statistics, as also are my personal impressions of the areas.

1. Director, S.E. of Scotland Development Authority: 'Analysis of Unemployment in Edinburgh': 26.10.73. (Unpublished).

Edinburgh.

Research in Edinburgh was mainly carried out between November 1971 and September 1972, though my acquaintance with the areas studied stretched back considerably further than that. Edinburgh, of course, is not a city that immediately conjures up images of 'gang' violence. As the capital of Scotland, as well as a major tourist attraction, its image is much more sedate and 'historical'. In fact, there is abundant evidence of its status with the presence of the royal palace at Holyrood, government offices, law courts and the headquarters of Scottish religious bodies, cultural organisations and Scottish banks and companies.

Edinburgh, however, is not only a centre of tourism and administration, it also has some important industries notably, printing, publishing, bookbinding, map-making, brewing, rubber manufacturing, general and electrical engineering and the manufacture of biscuits and cakes and flour confectionary. All in all, a fairly impressive range of industries which is reflected in the fact that male unemployment[1] at April 1971 was somewhat less than the average for Scotland as a whole, though rather worse than the average for the U.K.[2]

	Edinburgh	Scotland	U.K.
Male Unemployment (April 1971)	6.4%	7.5%	4.6%

The figures for female unemployment, on the other hand, are rather worse than both the Scottish and U.K. figures, perhaps because of the peculiarities of the Census information (See above).

Rather more worrying was the state of youth unemployment in Edinburgh at the date of the Census (April 1971). For the age range 15-20 yrs., the male unemployment rate was 13.3%[3], more than double the general rate (6.4%). This position slightly worsened for the 15-18yr. olds, the majority of the working subjects in this study - their unemployment was running at 13.6%.

For females, as compared with the Edinburgh rate of 3.3% females unemployed (Census 1971), 6.5% of the 15-20 age group were unemployed

1. Note. The emphasis in this research is on male unemployment since the phenomenon is mainly a male concern and most subjects were male.
2. Note. The Edinburgh figure from the '71 Census: Others from the Department of Employment Gazette.
3. Census figures (1971).

and 7.0% of the 15-18yr. olds.

These figures are quite alarming and become even more so if it is suggested that they might be worse in the separate wards. It is reasonable to expect that the youth unemployment rates within the individual wards will follow the trend of the city figures and reflect the differing impact of unemployment in the areas. Thus, if the youth unemployment rates for males are double the rate for male unemployment in Edinburgh city, it is conceivable that the same equation will operate in the Wards. For example, Harrytown had nearly 11% of males unemployed in April 1971 (Census), which represents a total of 22% of 15-20 year olds, assuming the above relationship to be true.

There are obvious dangers in such assumptions but, nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect as a general rule that, following the Edinburgh city figures, youth unemployment will be significantly worse than adult unemployment, a point to be considered when describing the position of the boys.

Again considering Edinburgh as a whole, it is useful to point out that development of the city during this century has taken place in a way that has had a considerable effect on the life-style of its inhabitants, in particular, their use of leisure facilities. Thus, while there has been a major expansion with successive bands of housing reflecting the current housing policy and economic circumstances, council house developments have been on the periphery, starting with Barrackhill and East Pilton between the Wars and leading to the recent Wester Hailes and other schemes. As a report on the Pilton area points out.[1]

> "The major public and commercial regional urban leisure facilities fall within the small central area of the city and the transitional ring about the centre. This concentration is reinforced by the road pattern and transportation policies."

The net effect of this centralisation of leisure facilities has been a corresponding absence of entertainment in the outlying estates, thus providing the boys with the 'contradiction' of considerable leisure time paralleled by a dearth of adequate commercial - or indeed, any - outlets in their immediate neighbourhood.

However, having briefly outlined the Edinburgh context, it is now appropriate to pursue a detailed description of the two major areas of

1.City of Edinburgh District Council: Pilton Study 1978 A.10.1.

research in that city, namely, Barrackhill and Harrytown. It should be pointed out that I lived in the former area and, indeed, rather more of the research was done there. This will in part account for the greater depth of description on Barrackhill, where Census and personal material has been usefully supplemented by a report carried out by the Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning at the University of Edinburgh.[1] Any comparative points will be made during the discussion of that area.

Harrytown.

Population.

At the 1971 Census, the population of Harrytown was 26,075 with males comprising 49.2% of the population and females 50.8%. This compared with a proportion of 46.5% males and 53.5% females in the Edinburgh population, a not very significant difference.

A further break-down of the 1971 Census figures allows a comparison of the age structure of the area with the Edinburgh structure. Thus, Edinburgh has 29.8% of its population under 20yrs. old, while Harrytown has 32.8%, slightly more than the average. Treating male and female separately, we find that Edinburgh has 32.3% of its males under 20yrs. old, while Harrytown has 35%. For females, Edinburgh has 27.4% and Harrytown 30.8%. None of these differences can be regarded as very significant.[2]

Again, with the population over 60, we find that Harrytown has rather less old people than Edinburgh (17.4% of the population as opposed to 20.7%). The greatest conclusion that can be drawn on this evidence is that the ward has rather more than the average of young people and a corresponding lack of old people, but not dramatically so. Certainly not to the extent that one might suggest an unbalanced age

1. 'Barrackhill': A Local Plan: Dept. of Urban Design and Regional Planning: University of Edinburgh: 2nd. Edition Nov. 1974.

2. Note.
The population statistics for all areas, but especially for Harrytown, may be distorted to a greater or lesser extent by the inclusion of owner-occupiers and private renters. It may also be the case that this inclusion conceals internal variations in the areas.
Thus, Harrytown had 13.7% of households occupied by owners or private renters, significantly more than in the other predominantly council housing areas (Barrackhill and Ferry Bank). Owner-occupiers in these areas were only 8.5% and 7.7% respectively; owner-occupiers alone in Harrytown accounted for 13.2% of households.

structure which might in turn have an effect on adolescent adaptation.

On the question of mobility, without access to housing statistics,[1] it is difficult to suggest the extent of housing transfers, movement out of the 'problem' parts of the ward, and so on. A consideration of the 1971 Census only tells us that, with regard to private households, there has been a slight decline in the population between 1961 and 1971.

Housing.[2]

A more adequate impression of the nature of the area is provided by a description of its housing. Historically, much of the council housing was a response, as in Barrackhill, to the post-war push for redevelopment. Thus, the largest development in the area was mainly completed between 1949 and 1951 and re-housed people from the old inner-city areas. This scheme comprises 1067 houses, the majority (895) having three or four apartments, i.e. family accommodation. Since 1951, there has been some infilling - in 1960, 27 houses, in 1967-68, 40 houses.

The other major developments were to the West and South of this large estate. To the South, begun in 1947, was a mixed public/private development and to the West a medium-sized estate of 451 houses in a mixture of conventional and multi-storey accommodation. This latter scheme was completed in 1967 with predominantly two or three apartments, rather smaller than on the large estate.

The overwhelming dominance of rented accommodation, particularly of council housing, is shown in Figure 1. In particular, note the low percentage of owner-occupiers, many of whom were concentrated in a large private estate to the north of the ward. Assuming that council house tenants tend to be working class, it can be seen that approximately 75% of housing was built for concentrations of that class.

However, there is no doubt that the quality of this housing is dramatically better than that from which the original tenants came. The 1971 Census reveals an almost 100% exclusive use of a hot water supply.

1. Note.
   In spite of several requests for information, no response was forthcoming from the Housing Departments of either Edinburgh or Dundee.
2. Note.
   Although the statistics refer to housing throughout the ward, my major concern was with the large scheme known as the 'House' estate.

Fig.1: Housing Tenure: Harrytown Ward: 1971 Census.

Type.		Households. No.	%
Owner Occupier		1135	13.26
Renting Furnished	)Private	35	0.4
Renting Unfurnished	)Private	995	11.6
Council Housing		6390	74.69
Total		8555	99.95

Fig.2. Persons per room: Harrytown Ward: 1971 Census.

Rented from Council, New Town, SSHA	No. of persons per room %			
	Over 1½	1-1½	½-1	under ½
Edinburgh	8.7	18.8	62	10.4
Harrytown	4.1	14.7	65.8	15.5

Fig.3. Density of Occupation/All Tenures: 1971 Census.

	No. of persons per room %			
	Over 1½	1-1½	½-1	under ½
Edinburgh	10.7	18.2	59.3	11.9
Harrytown	8.1	23.5	62.1	6.2

fixed bath or shower and an inside flush toilet. Again, overcrowding on two measures is shown to be rather better than the Edinburgh average. First, a consideration of council housing alone and, second, a consideration of all tenures by density of occupation (see Figs. 2 & 3 above). Even when considering all tenures, Harrytown remains better than the Edinburgh average, though not by such a margin. This suggests that council housing may raise standards in an area - owner occupation is not always an advantage.

However, while it cannot be denied that Harrytown has the basic amenities and is not subject to significant overcrowding, it must be pointed out that the ward cannot be regarded as an entity; a distinction must be made between different parts of the area, some being more attractive to tenants than others. Moreover, my research tended to concentrate on the least 'attractive' and oldest part of the area.

Briefly, Harrytown is dominated by the post-war estate of over 1000 houses which will be referred to as the 'House' scheme. Even this area, however, has internal divisions based on the type of housing. In the northern section, the housing is exclusively of a three-storey tenement type with flat roofs and a uniformly drab brown harling. To the South, the rest of the housing comprises a mixture of semi-detached

houses and flats, again with the same brown harling on exterior walls. These latter flats comprise four in a block but each with its own main door and private garden, so rather different from the tenement flats.

Many of the 'problems' associated with the estate centred around the tenement blocks which posed special difficulties for the occupiers, mainly associated with the 'public' nature of their entrances and gardens. The common entrance or 'stair' had, in many cases, become almost a public facility, the residents having retreated behind the security of their front doors. On occasion, this appropriation of the 'stair' would be taken to extremes, especially where the tenement was situated near a bus-stop; in bad weather the 'stair' would double as a bus shelter. Another frequent complaint of residents was the use of the 'stair' as a urinal; this happened most frequently where the block stood in a direct line between the 'pub' and the bus terminus. Again, teenagers would gather on the 'stair', as would younger children, generally making a noise, and often covering the walls with graffiti, further reinforcing this 'public' image. While in some cases the residents would struggle to maintain the block's privacy, others gradually became disillusioned and accepted these intrusions as inevitable. Of course, there were tenements that avoided these problems but usually thanks to the 'dedication' of one or other of the residents, who soon gained a reputation among the young people as 'greetin' old bastards', and were likely to get their tyres let down or inconvenienced in some other way.

Another problem for the tenement population, resolved in some cases, but a continuing aggravation for many, was the control of the front and rear gardens. The planners obviously intended these areas to be maintained by the residents of the blocks but, unfortunately, the reality turned out to be rather different. Even in those cases where residents had made a determined effort to develop some kind of garden, they had to fight a continuing battle with children and dogs who persisted in breaking through the fences and trampling the hedges and flowers in pursuit of a 'short cut', or just for the 'sheer hell of it'. Indeed, for the majority of tenants, the struggle was just too much and they confined their efforts to keeping the 'garden' tidy (litter free) and evicting intruders whose presence was simply too blatant.

This situation was greatly aggravated if the bottom flat became

vacant; the tenants of these usually taking the most direct interest in the garden, which they overlooked. The boarded-up windows then became the target for graffiti and litter, junk and assorted debris began to find their way into the garden. Again, this had an effect throughout the block with the depressing surroundings increasing disenchantment with the house in particular and the area in general - 'it's a dump' was a common observation. Overall, there was a cumulative adverse effect on residents and visitors.

Of course, the semi-detached buildings mentioned above did not have the same problems with regard to privacy and their immediate surroundings did not suffer quite the same depressing degeneration. This was evidenced in the higher standard of gardens and fences; residents obviously felt it much easier to protect their home and extended this protection to <u>their</u> garden and <u>their</u> fence. However, the presence of the tenements and the uniformly drab external appearance of the housing in general combined to create a somewhat depressing aura around the estate as a whole.

This was evidenced in the feeling held by many residents that the estate was going 'downhill'; some felt that the council was 'dumping' 'problem' families in the tenement blocks in particular and sometimes in the more 'desirable' semis. The more aspiring tenants of the tenements felt that it was difficult to maintain 'standards' when surrounded by those who just 'don't care', people who had been evicted before and probably would be again. The net result was that many residents spoken to talked about 'moving out'. Unfortunately, lack of access to Housing Department records makes these assertions impressionistic, based on conversations with residents rather than on numbers of formal transfer requests.

Nevertheless, at the time of the research, it did seem that there was a tendency to more empty houses, especially in the tenement blocks. The presence of these vacant properties was made very visible by the boarding that went up immediately over the windows; any delay inevitably meant broken windows and interior damage. Moreover, some of these houses remained empty for long periods which the residents took as confirmation that the area was less than desirable. The 'semis', on the other hand, at least in terms of the 'House' estate, were regarded rather more favourably, though people from outside the area tended to regard the whole scheme as one to be avoided.

To the West of this area was the estate of 451 houses completed in

1967. The majority of these were of multi-storey construction with the remainder of the conventional semi-detached variety. Although built much later than the area described above, it tended to be regarded as part of the 'House' and to be labelled with similar reservations as a place to live. The 'multis' in particular attracted teenagers who would 'hang about' in the entrances and car parks or play football against the walls. It was in this area that many of the cars stolen in a spate of 'joyriding' were 'borrowed', a fact that caused the tenants of these blocks a considerable degree of worry. However, generally, there did seem to be fewer empty houses in this part of the area and rather less dumping and graffiti, though obviously, the walls of the flats proved irresistible to the paint sprayers. Nevertheless, inaccurate though it may have seemed to some of the residents, the 'House' estate was <u>generally</u> regarded as an area with 'problems'.

<u>Employment</u>.

Of course, as with any area housing a large number of the working classes, a major issue was employment. The Edinburgh context has already been outlined, but it is worth repeating that the 1971 Census revealed a male unemployment rate for the city of 6.4%, with male youth unemployment (15-18yr. olds) running at more than double this figure (13.6%). Moreover, the inequitable distribution of unemployment around Edinburgh is revealed by the enormous variation between an area like St. Giles with 14.3% male unemployment and the middle class suburb of Corstorphine with a mere 2% of males unemployed. The other wards had varying rates within this broad range.

In fact, it is the large concentrations of council housing which suffer the main burden of unemployment. Thus, Pilton, Barrackhill and Harrytown, in which 18.1% of the city's economically active male population lives, had 34.2% of Edinburgh's male unemployed. With women, the position is not as extreme; the Census reveals a city average of 3.3% female unemployment, rather more than the Department of Employment figures, for reasons mentioned earlier. However, my main concern is with male unemployment since the participants in the 'ganging' phenomenon are mainly male and between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

Significantly, the Department of Employment Gazette monthly statistics show a percentage male unemployment for Scotland throughout the period of the Edinburgh research significantly worse than the April 1971 official figure of 7.5%.[1] The rate never dropped below 8.3% and peaked in February 1972 at 12.3%. The implication would be that the relative position outlined here for Harrytown would, throughout the study period, have been significantly worse than the April 1971 Census figures suggest. In particular, youth unemployment in February 1972 must have been extremely high.

However, to outline the relative position, which is all that the 1971 Census permits us to do, at that time, 10.7% of economically active adult males in the Harrytown ward were unemployed. Out of 23 wards, the area rated fourth worst. Indeed, the ward had 6.2% of the total economically active male population in Edinburgh but 10.4% of the city's unemployed.

Moreover, this was despite the building of a large new industrial estate within easy walking distance of the main concentrations of council housing. As is often the case with modern light manufacturing industry, the real result of this development seems to have been the creation of better work opportunities for women in the ward who had slightly less than the Edinburgh average of unemployment.

Social Facilities.

It has already been implied that the development of Edinburgh resulted in the centralisation of the main commercial leisure outlets. The result was that the outlying areas were left with what could be called basic working class provision, i.e. 'bookies' and 'pubs'. For example, in the area central to this research, the 'House' estate, there were two public houses on the periphery, both rather basic in their provision; the public bars obviously catering for the 'working man's' relaxation - beer and darts - and the lounge areas anything but sophisticated.

There was no Bingo Hall but the 'Bookies' more than made up for this deficiency, being well-patronised at all times of the day, by housewives as well as by the menfolk. Again, this building was strictly functional, no frills, dedicated to the job at hand, that is, making or losing money.

1.These figures are not adjusted seasonally or for school leavers.

As for shops, parks, and playgrounds, there was a fairly good range of shops to the south and a small shopping precint within the estate itself. However, there were no swings or play areas, with the exception of a large open field to the west of the estate, separated from it by a very busy road. Children had little choice but to play in the streets - a further 'provocation' to the hard-pressed residents. The inevitable result was a variable amount of glass and litter which often lay undisturbed for long periods.

Teenagers in the area found little to do either, until of course they 'looked' old enough to frequent one of the local 'pubs'. They were considerably helped in this 'aging' process by the ability of the local landlords to almost invariably 'mistake' a fifteen year old, and sometimes even younger boys, for a 'legal' drinker. The need for 'under-age' drinking was exacerbated by the failure of the local community centre to provide regular 'entertainment'. The boys had no choice but to go into the city centre in search of 'discos' and coffee bars. The net result for the adult residents was the 'unnerving' presence of groups of noisy and boisterous teenagers in certain areas unofficially designated as meeting places. Most popular among these were the 'Multis' and the bus terminus.

Generally, the net result of peripheral location and 'isolation' from the main commercial leisure facilities was that week-day monotony contrasted even more acutely with the 'Saturday Night Out', usually consisting of a trip into the city centre. The expense of such a venture and the often long bus journey involved made such 'expeditions' during the week a less feasible possibility. Moreover, the 'pay packet' was invariably received on a Thursday or Friday and was thus readily available for week-end 'excitement'. This week-end 'affluence' contrasted sharply with week-day 'poverty'. Invariably, Monday morning arrived with the boys broke, or nearly so. It was common for them to 'tap' their parents and friends for bus fares, lunch money etc. Indeed, one of my major initial difficulties in the field was persuading the boys that, if anything, I had even less money than they had and could not be relied on as a 'tap'.

Barrackhill.[1]

Population.[2]

The population of the area in 1971 was 24,600 of which 48.2% were males and 51.7% females. This compared with a % for Edinburgh of 46.5% males and 53.5% females, a not greatly significant difference.

However, rather more interesting was the age structure of the area. In fact, Barrackhill had 41.5% of its population under the age of 20 compared to an Edinburgh average of only 29.8%. Broken down further by sex, 43.5% of the male population was under 20, compared to 32.3% for Edinburgh, while 39.5% of the female population was under 20 compared to 27.4% for Edinburgh. These are significant differences and suggest an imbalanced age structure.

This is confirmed by looking at those over 60 in the ward. Whereas Edinburgh had nearly 21% of its population over 60, Barrackhill had a mere 13%. While one would not necessarily agree with the possible conclusion that this might lead to an absence of control over the younger sections of the population, nevertheless, it is evident that in Barrackhill there was a significant over-representation of young people, especially under 20; a point to be considered when constructing an impression of the area. However, the situation in Harrytown prevents an over-emphasis on the significance of these figures, since although there were similar problems of 'ganging' and group violence in both areas, the relative proportions of the population here were not so out of line with the Edinburgh average. (32.8% under 20 in Harrytown, compared to 29.8% for Edinburgh.)[3]

With regard to mobility, the rapid expansion of council house building, both inter and post-war, led to the population increasing between 1931-1951 from under 2000 to over 17,000. Between 1951-61, it was one of only eight wards in the city to experience any population growth. However, between 1961-71, this trend was reversed

1. This section has been valuably supplemented by a report from the Dept. of Urban Design and Regional Planning, University of Edinburgh: 'Barrackhill': A Local Plan: 2nd. Edition Nov. 1974.
2. Information from 1971 Census.
3. Note. As pointed out in the population statistics for Harrytown, the inclusion of owner-occupiers and, to a lesser extent, private renters, may be a distorting factor. The Harrytown trend towards an 'excess' of younger people may in fact be more in line with the more significant findings in Barrackhill where owner-occupiers comprised only 8.5% of households (in Harrytown, 13.2% of households). Of course, private renting accounted for another 7.4% of households in Barrackhill.

with a slight decrease. There is some evidence[1] that this can be attributed to a movement out of the young and ambitious and certainly there is a relationship between 'getting on' and 'getting out' of Barrackhill.

Of course, initially much of the development of the area was in response to city centre slum clearance and it remains strongly working class. Thus, the 'Barrackhill' Report remarks on:[2]

> "...a low car ownership (21% at the time of the 1971 Census) and a large percentage of children on free school meals (54% in March 1974 when the team surveyed schools in the Ward)...."

Again, without pre-empting more detailed discussion later, Barrackhill has consistently had some of the highest rates of <u>both</u> male and female unemployment of all the wards in the city and these are frequently twice the city average. With regard to crime....[3]

> "(Barrackhill)..has probably the worst criminal record of any ward in the city with, for example, the largest number of referrals to the Children's Panels, and among the largest number of adult males convicted."

Indeed, even more so than Harrytown, the area has gained an unfortunate image, widely held throughout the city, as a scheme with 'problems', an area in which one does not willingly accept a tenancy. In short, if possible, one waits for a 'better' offer rather than accepting a house there. The net result was that:[4]

> "Edinburgh has a housing waiting list of 9,000 and yet over 400 houses stand vacant in (Barrackhill)."

<u>Housing</u>.

This brings us quite neatly to the question of housing. In fact, it might be true to say that the area came into existence primarily as a re-housing project for the working classes. Even after the Great War, the area remained largely farming land and, indeed, the bulk of the ward remained outside the city boundary.

The new housing legislation of the 1920's and its subsequent developments have provided the basis for most of the residential expansion in the area, beginning with the massive 'Mains' scheme comprising almost 2,000 dwellings, many of the tenement type, completed over seven years in thirteen separate developments (1930-36). This rehoused slum clearance families from St. Leonard's and Leith and was closely followed by the 'Castle' development (630 houses) which was

1.The 'Barrackhill' Report: op. cit. 2.Ibid. P.74
3.Ibid. P.34. 4.Ibid. P.6.

more controlled and built in a single operation between 1938 and 1939, again drawing tenants from the slum clearance areas of central Edinburgh.

After the Second World War, the pressure for accommodation dramatically increased with an acute national housing shortage and two large new estates were constructed, the one of 630 houses and the other of 929. At the same time, emergency accommodation was put up in the 'Dykes' and 'Field' areas.

These developments were followed in the late 1950's by the 'Mill' and 'Marischal' estates (103 and 338 houses respectively) and, in the 1960's, by the redevelopment of the emergency accommodation in the 'Dykes' and 'Field' areas. Major development ended with the construction of the tower blocks in the 'Road' and 'Marischal' estates. Further building was confined to infilling.

The result of this massive programme of council house building was a large, local authority housing area with a mere 8.5% of owner occupiers and these on the boundaries of the large schemes or along the main road through the area. A dramatic 84% of houses were rented from the council. (Figure 1)

Fig.1 1971 Census: Housing Tenure: Barrackhill.

Households.

Type.	No.	%
Owner Occupiers	619	8.5
Renting Furnished	42	0.6
Renting Unfurnished	495	6.8
Council Renting	6101	84.0
Total	7257	99.9

Fig.2. 1971 Census: Density of Occupation/Council Housing.

Rented from Council	Total Households	No. of persons per room %			
		Over 1½	1-1½	½-1	under ½
Edinburgh	49915	8.7	18.8	62	10.4
Harrytown	6390	4.1	14.7	65.8	15.5
Barrackhill	6100	14.3	21.6	57.4	6.8

Bare statistics tend to give a rather better impression of the housing than that created by personal viewing or conversation with the residents. Thus, as in Harrytown, there is an almost 100% exclusive use of a hot water supply, fixed bath or shower and inside flush toilet. However, whereas Harrytown tends to have a significantly better situation than Edinburgh as a whole with regard to density of

occupation, Barrackhill shows up rather poorly in this respect. (See Figure 2.) Considering all tenures, by density of occupation alone, the figures are even more striking (See Figure 3.). In fact, with Pilton, Barrack hill has the highest density of occupation in Edinburgh.

Fig. 3. 1971 Census: Density of Occupation/Permanent Buildings.

	No. of persons per room %			
	Over $1\frac{1}{2}$	$1-1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}-1$	under $\frac{1}{2}$
Edinburgh	10.7	18.2	59.3	11.9
Harrytown	8.1	23.5	62.1	6.2
Barrackhill	23.9	27.8	44.9	3.4

The problem with such figures is that although they give us a general indication of the problems in the area, they do not reveal the diversity of standards between different estates in the Ward. A tour around the area is sufficient to confirm the relative unattractiveness of the older housing, especially the two large estates - the 'Mains' and the 'Terrace' - built immediately before the War. The Edinburgh research team concludes[1]...

> "The corporation has great difficulty in finding families willing to accept a tenancy in the older schemes and there are many empty houses. Also the number of tenants waiting to be re-allocated from these areas, either to another scheme in the ward or to another part of the city, is well above the average for the city as a whole."

In fact, a comparison of the valuation roll in 1971-72 and 1972-73 reveals an increase in the number of empty houses in the 'Mains' estate, from 7% of total houses to $12\frac{1}{2}$%, or put another way, from 13⅓ to 239 houses (out of 1925 properties). In particular streets, the problem was rapidly reaching disaster proportions; the 'Terrace', for example, had 44 out of 321 houses empty in 1971-2 and a staggering 100 in 1972-3 (31%). Indeed, no new tenants had been allocated a house in this street since 1970.

Although particular streets resembled derelict areas, the empty houses were not confined to the inter-war housing areas. Even in the more recent estates, the numbers exceeded that which one might reasonably expect. Indeed, the Edinburgh research team[2] find the mere existence of the empty houses a factor in the declining attractiveness of the area. Empty houses bricked or boarded-up are a 'terrible eyesore'

1. 'Barrackhill' Report: op. cit. P. 38.
2. Ibid.

which cannot fail to 'put off' potential tenants.

In fact, looking back with a certain degree of hindsight, the Edinburgh group place a share of the blame on the housing policy of the council and central government. Whereas in the 1920's, tenants for new corporation estates were usually drawn from higher income groups on the waiting list, the 1930 and 1935 Housing Acts made the priority the rehousing of anyone from slum or substandard housing.

The net result since that time would seem to have been the setting aside of certain estates to house only the lower income groups and those from slum areas. Four main reasons are put forward by the Research group for the decline of the 'Castle' and 'Main' estates.[1]

> "...a high concentration of problem families, the unattractive tenements, their stigma, and perhaps through official or unofficial neglect by the corporation."

Whatever the reasons, the results are only too plain to see and have an immediate effect on any visitors - empty boarded-up houses, play areas strewn with broken glass and litter, play equipment lying broken and derelict and a clustering of social problems, such as delinquency and child neglect, taxing the ingenuity of the various social and penal services.

This is the 'real' picture behind the statistics which may reveal the existence of basic amenities while disguising their real quality. Thus, the tenement blocks of the inter-war estates are monotonously uniform in their design, layout and materials. The grey colour of the harling aggregate reflects the grey depression inspired by the area. The houses themselves had living areas that were too small for the large families (reflected in the tables on density of occupation above), storage provision was minimal and the electrical installations and sanitary fittings generally out of date and inadequate.

Moreover, as with the tenement blocks in Harrytown, there were similar problems of privacy. Again, the net result was that anything outside one's main door was public, out of control. Litter was never absent from streets and gardens, while broken glass was strewn over roads, backgreens and play areas. Graffiti covered not only bus shelters (which invariably had their windows replaced by steel plates), but also the exterior of shops (always boarded-up at night) and even the tenements.

This description applies also to the more modern housing, particularly those early post-war developments that followed the

1. 'Barrackhill' Report: op. cit. P.40.

tenement trend. The 'Avenue' estate with its two and three storey flats, often arranged in long terraces, showed many of the signs of deterioration exhibited by the inter-war areas. The Edinburgh research team notes 'deterioration' even on the most recent housing estates where invariably the construction of dwellings has completely outpaced the provision of facilities.[1]

Finally, a rather 'pathetic' indicator of the lost battle that has been fought throughout the ward between the 'public' and the 'private' is provided by the considerable amount of derelict land. Play areas and drying greens once intended to alleviate the confinement of the flats and tenements have been quite literally 'abandoned' and now stand in a derelict condition symbolising the failures of the planners.

Employment.

The employment situation was indicative of the problems facing the area. Barrackhill was without even the saving grace of Harrytown - the presence of industry. Since the Second World War, there has been a considerable influx of light manufacturing industry into Edinburgh but this has settled mainly in the West of the city, a long and expensive bus journey from Barrackhill. At the same time, the more traditional industries located in the centre of the city (brewing, malting, printing and publishing) have declined somewhat. The net effect has been a gradual decrease in employment opportunities in the East of the city. In fact, the vast majority of the employed have to leave the ward for employment.

This depressing picture is reflected in the 1971 Census figures which showed that 14.1% of economically active adult males in the ward were unemployed. This compared with 6.4% for Edinburgh as a whole and 10.7% for Harrytown. In fact, Barrackhill was second only to St. Giles as the city's chief unemployment black spot. Remembering, as pointed out earlier, that throughout the period of research (Nov. 1971 to Sept. 1972), the Department of Employment figures were consistently worse than in April 1971, the date of the Census, the position during my stay in the area may have exceeded quite considerably even the very high figure of 14%.

Again, remembering that the 1971 Census revealed male and female unemployment rates for the 15-20yr. old age group both running at more than double the Edinburgh average, the prospects of employment in the

1. Ibid.

Barrackhill ward for young people were very poor indeed - theoretically twice as bad as adult unemployment, and certainly between 25-30%.

The social effects of this poor employment position were made worse by the fact that female unemployment was also worse than the Edinburgh average - 5.4% of the female labour force was unemployed compared with a city average of 3.3%. Indeed, the depressing economic position in the ward is summed up by the fact that, in April 1971 (Census), Barrackhill had only 5.3% of the economically active male population of Edinburgh but 11.6% of the city's unemployed. For females, the corresponding figures were 4.8% and 7.9%.

Social Facilities.

In the East of the city, Barrackhill is some distance from the city centre. Moreover, like Harrytown, another peripheral estate, it suffers from the tendency of the road and transport systems to be radial rather than orbital. The journey into the centre is lengthy and the fare expensive but, to enjoy the theatres, cinemas and 'discos' concentrated there, the residents must make the journey. Provision within the ward is restricted and dependent on the 'traditional' patronage of the working class, with five public houses and fourteen bingo and betting halls.

Although the young had their youth clubs organised by the schools and churches, there were no commercial facilities, with the exception of two cafes. As in Harrytown, the week-days were endured in a leisure vacuum in contrast to the week-ends which often suffered from the inverse problems of 'excess' - fighting, drunkedness and arrest. Again, there was a tendency for semi-public areas, such as the rows of small shops and the playgrounds, to become the focus of teenage activity during the week.

For the younger children, there were a number of static playgrounds but these were little used with the equipment often made unsafe by vandalism. Street games dominated play, especially football. Visitors to the area often pointed out the emptiness of the green open spaces while the streets were being used as playgrounds by children of all ages up to the early teens. What they did not see, of course, was the broken glass and other dangerous debris that could make an attractive green area potentially lethal.

Dundee.[1]

Research in Dundee was mainly carried out between October 1972 and August 1973 in two areas, Ferry Bank and Jute Hill. However, more so than in Edinburgh, the time spent in these areas was unfairly distributed. The location of the Coffee Bar, in and around which most of the information was collected, in the Jute Hill area meant that far greater emphasis was placed on developments in that part of the city. However, the 'members' of the group known as the 'Tongs' came mainly from the Ferry Bank area and some description of that estate is therefore required.

Before beginning a discussion of the specific areas, it is useful to convey to the reader some impression of the Dundee situation as a whole. Dundee, of course, is a seaport, manufacturing and market town situated on the north bank of the Firth of Tay. At the 1971 Census, its population was 182,204, making it one of the four large cities in Scotland. Although there is a University, an Institute of Art and Technology and two Colleges of Further Education, the city is of a rather different and more industrial character than Edinburgh. By this, it is meant that there is not that stately, historical, that is, tourist background that dominates the Capital. Instead, there are extensive jute and linen manufactures and fruit preserving works as well as shipbuilding, engineering, shoemaking and the manufacture of confectionary and tyres. These more traditional industries are supplemented by a post-war industrial estate which contains numerous light engineering factories producing a wide range of mechanical, electrical and electronic goods and equipment.

However, this concentration of industry has not saved the city from unemployment rates significantly higher than the Scottish average. Whereas, in April 1971, the Department of Employment Gazette showed male unemployment in Scotland at 7.5% (compared to 4.6% in the U.K.), the 1971 Census indicated male unemployment in Dundee at 10%. (The Census figure for Edinburgh was 6.4%) Although, for reasons stated earlier, the Census figures for females are not as comparable with Department of Employment returns, the corresponding figures for females are: Scotland 2.9% (Dept. of Employment, April 1971), Dundee 7.8% (Census 1971), Edinburgh 3.3% (Census 1971).

1. Note. The following description of the areas studied in Dundee will of course be based on the assumptions regarding statistics outlined earlier. This applies particularly to employment statistics.

This depressing picture is repeated with regard to youth unemployment.[1] For the age group 15-20 yrs. old, male unemployment was 14.6%, compared to 13.3% for Edinburgh, and the female figure was 11.3%, compared again to 6.5% for Edinburgh. On the other hand, the 15-18yr. olds were in a marginally better position; 14% of males in that age group were unemployed in Dundee, although the female rate went up to 11.7%.

Unlike the Edinburgh situation, however, where youth unemployment was revealed by the Census to be approximately twice the general rate (for males 15-20, 13.3%, as opposed to 6.4%), the Dundee rates for unemployment in the 15-20yrs. age group were only half as much again as the general rate (males, 15-20yrs., 14.6% as opposed to 10% for Dundee's economically active males.) Similarly, for females in the 15-20 age group, unemployment was 11.3% compared to 7.8% of total economically active females. Nevertheless, youth unemployment for both males and females was higher in Dundee than in Edinburgh.

Another difference between the Edinburgh and Dundee situations that must be pointed out is that, whereas the Edinburgh research coincided with a period of worsening unemployment nationally, the same is not true of the time spent in Dundee. Thus, while the Department of Employment figures for Scotland[2] reveal that the April 1971 % rate was always lower than the monthly figures for the period Nov. 1971-Sept. 1972 (the Edinburgh research), male unemployment peaking at a massive 12.3% in Feb. 1972, there was a general improvement in the figures for the period Oct. 1972-Aug. 1973 (the Dundee research). In fact, for only three of these months was male unemployment worse than the April 1971 rate of 7.5%, and then only marginally so. After Feb. 1973, both male and female rates declined steadily to reach a low of 5.7% for males and 2.3% for females in August 1973.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is, of course, that, although the April 1971 Census figures may reveal the relative position of the different wards in Dundee to each other, to Dundee city and to the official Department of Employment figures for Scotland for that date, it must be remembered that, if anything, the position throughout the actual period of the research in terms of the real (current) rates in the areas studied will have been rather better than the Census figures suggest. In Edinburgh, the position of course was the reverse with an increase in national unemployment rates suggesting an actual worsening

1.Census 1971 2.Dept. of Employment Gazette.

of the relative position revealed by the 1971 Census.

Before proceeding with a description of the two areas studied, it is useful to point out that, as in Edinburgh, Dundee has followed a similar pattern of peripheral development with the large council estates generally being built outside the central area. Again, the roads and public transport tend to be radial with similar difficulties if one wishes to travel from one peripheral estate to another. Of course, Dundee is a much smaller city than Edinburgh and bus journeys to the centre are not nearly as lengthy.

Although, as with its larger neighbour, there has been a centralisation of leisure facilities in Dundee, the problem for the residents, especially young people, is rather different, namely, the <u>inadequacy</u> of even the central facilities. Thus, a journey through the city centre reveals a poor range of entertainment, especially for the 15-18yr. old age group. Many of the city centre bars have 'Over 21yrs. Only' signs because of under-age drinking in the past. On the other hand, the major 'Discos' were 'relics' of the 50's and 60's, with names such as the 'Palais' and the 'J.M. Ballroom' - again, these were usually confined to the over-21's.

In fact, even the often 'conservative' Dundee Press expressed concern about the absence of adequate commercial leisure outlets for the teenage population.[1] A Bailie on the Bench at the Burgh Court lamented the decline in cinemas (down from 13 in 1957 to 4 in 1973) and dance halls, practically non-existent, posing the question - 'Does Dundee drive its youngsters to drink?' It would not be overstating the case to conclude that, in Dundee, teenagers existed in a leisure vacuum without <u>even</u> the week-end highlight of a city centre search for entertainment. At least in Edinburgh, discos and other entertainments were rather more in evidence; boredom was confined to weekdays rather than week-ends.

<u>Ferry Bank</u>.

As has already been pointed out, rather less emphasis was placed on research in this area and the main burden of description will fall on Jute Hill. However, since the 'Tongs' mainly came from Ferry Bank, it is important to convey some impression of this area, in particular, the housing, population, employment, and social facilities.

<u>Population</u>.

The population of the ward in 1971 (Census figures) was 19,445

1. <u>Dundee People's Journal</u> May 5th. 1973.

of which 48.7% were males and 51.3% females. This compared with a Dundee population of 182,205, 47% males and 52.7% females - a not very significant difference. Between 1961-71, the population of the area had decreased, but only slightly.

However, a break-down of the age structure is rather more interesting. Like Barrackhill in Edinburgh, there was a tendency towards an imbalanced age structure with a concentration of young people under 20 and a relative lack of older people over 60. Thus, while Dundee had 33.1% of its population under 20, Ferry Bank had 42.2%. For <u>males</u>, the proportions under 20 were 35.7% of the male population for Dundee and 43.8% for Ferry Bank. For <u>females</u>, 30.9% for Dundee, 40.7% for Ferry Bank were under 20.

The over-60's, on the other hand, were quite significantly underrepresented, with Ferry Bank having 10.3% of its population in this age group and Dundee 18.3%. However, these figures must not be given too much emphasis since, on the same evidence, Harrytown does not show such a marked imbalance in age structure, although Barrackhill does show a similar trend to Ferry Bank.

<u>Housing.</u>

<u>Figure 1. 1971 Census: Ferry Bank: Type of Tenure.</u>

<u>Households.</u>

<u>Type.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%.</u>
Owner Occupier	420	7.7
Renting Furnished	35	0.6
Renting Unfurnished	170	3.1
Council Renting	4855	88.6
Total	5480	100.0

The Ferry Bank area was intended to rehouse those from slum or sub-standard housing in the central areas and was constructed in the 1950's as a peripheral scheme. As in the other areas described, council housing predominates (See Figure 1 above). In fact, while 89% of housing is council owned, nearly 93% of all housing is rented. In fact, with owner occupiers comprising only 7.7% of housing, one might reasonably conclude that there is a predominance of working class residents in the ward.

Apart from this predominance of council housing, there are other similarities to the Edinburgh areas, especially Barrackhill. Thus, council housing is significantly more densely populated than the Dundee average. (See Figure 2.)

Fig. 2. 1971 Census: Density of Occupation/Council Housing.

Rented from Council	Total Households	No. of persons per room %			
		Over 1½	1-1½	½-1	under ½
Dundee	37615	6.8	17.3	65.7	10.2
Ferry Bank	4855	11.5	24.0	57.4	7.1

Indeed, when considering persons in permanent buildings simply by density of occupation (all tenures), Ferry Bank has the second highest density of occupation (persons per room) in the twelve wards in the city.

In contrast was the high proportion of houses (almost 100%) with exclusive use of a hot water supply, fixed bath or shower and inside flush toilet. As in Edinburgh, it must be pointed out that the existence of these amenities did not necessarily mean that the housing was regarded as 'modern' by the residents. In particular, the older parts of the estate tended to be rather outmoded in the type and quality of the basic amenities provided.

The type of housing in Ferry Bank was rather more varied than that in the Edinburgh housing areas, especially Barrackhill, but nevertheless, the overall effect reflects the date of its construction. The exterior walls were extremely drab with a uniform finish that breeds a vague impression of anonymity. It is difficult to understand why so many large council estates give this impression although it is almost symbolic in its denial of identity, of individuality, to the predominantly working class residents of these areas. Middle-class housing areas, on the other hand, seem to lean towards creating one's own, personal dwelling - a symbol of one's position in society.

Of course, council estates are managed and maintained by others, whereas owner occupiers have control over their own homes. The concepts of central management, of efficiency and repair 'systems', probably account for the tendency to standardise, to deny individuality - 'exceptions' make planning more difficult.

Much of the appearance and spirit of Ferry Bank is captured by the earlier descriptions of council schemes, in particular, that of the Barrackhill area. The same problems were encountered in the tenement blocks and flats and the same dereliction of the 'public' as opposed to the preservation of the 'private'. Thus, one might see a house visibly reflecting the high standards of its tenant facing a playground that had been battered and abused into 'oblivion'. The resident concentrates on his easily-controlled privacy (behind his

front door) and blames the 'public' decline of the area on the council, the 'Housing' (the Housing Department), and so on. The alternative would be to wage a running battle with not only the young people who appropriate the 'public' areas of the estate but also with other residents who use the public/private dichotomy to justify tipping unwanted junk on playgrounds, green areas and unoccupied gardens.

Empty houses, of course, provide the clearest example of this thinking, incomprehensible to the casual visitor, but readily understood when one remembers that the vast majority of the population in the area are not <u>owners</u>, but <u>tenants</u>. This tenancy is often regarded as extending only to the dwelling, carrying no responsibility for the area as a whole, the control of the 'public'. Thus, a house that is occupied is 'private' and therefore protected, while any empty property becomes 'public', reverts back to the 'Housing', who must hasten to protect it before it suffers the fate of other such 'uncontrolled' areas. A startling witness to this 'rule' is provided by the bottom flat with its windows smashed and interior vandalised, while neighbouring dwellings in the same block survive completely unscathed.

To sum up the housing in the area, one might say that it captured perfectly the spirit of the large council housing scheme. Although parts of the estate had been up for twenty years, the public/private dichotomy, based on the bare fact of tenancy rather than ownership and strengthened by the policy of housing 'management', <u>logically</u> followed by the local authority, has been 'institutionalised' in preference to a sense of 'community' in the old sense of 'neighbourliness' with informal 'control' over other residents. The present reality, depressing both visually and spiritually to the outsider (and certainly to the officers involved in its management), does not indicate the 'slum' origins of the tenants, as is often suggested, but their adaptation to the reality of their limited control over even that most personal of commodities - <u>their home</u>.

<u>Employment</u>.

It has already been pointed out that male unemployment in Dundee was revealed by the 1971 Census to be rather worse (10%) than the Edinburgh rate (6.4%). However, the same pattern of area variations occurred, though the deviations from the city average were not as marked as in Edinburgh. (In Edinburgh, male unemployment in the areas studied was <u>more than</u> double the city rate in Barrackhill and <u>nearly</u> double in Harrytown.)

Thus, 13.5% of economically active males were unemployed in Ferry Bank in April 1971 (Census). Put another way, 10.8% of the total economically active male population of Dundee lived in the ward but it had 14.6% of the city's total male unemployed.

Female unemployment in the area was high (8.0%) but not much higher than the city average (7.8%). Remember that in Edinburgh female unemployment was 3.3% at the time of the Census (April 1971). In a situation of high unemployment, the ability of the mother to find a job to supplement income can be quite crucial; Ferry Bank suffers rather more than the Edinburgh housing schemes in this respect - even Barrackhill, with female unemployment at 5.4% was quite significantly better off.

However, it is the young people who are the main concern of this research and although, as has already been pointed out, the city average for males in the 15-20 yrs. age group (14.6%) was not more than double the general rate as in Edinburgh (6.4% male unemployment/13.3% male unemployment 15-20yr. olds), in absolute terms the city unemployment rate for this age group was significantly worse than in Edinburgh.[1]

Again, for females, the same doubling of the general rate occurred in Edinburgh (3.3% female unemployed/6.5% of 15-20yr. olds unemployed). In Dundee, on the other hand, as with male unemployment, the relative position of young people was not so desperate (7.8% female unemployment/ 11.3% of 15-20yr. olds). Nevertheless, in absolute terms, girls between 15-20 yrs. old in Dundee, like the boys, were significantly less likely than in Edinburgh to find employment, nearly twice as many proportionately being unemployed.

However, bearing in mind the relative positions outlined above, and assuming that at any particular time the employment position of both adults and young people will be worse in Ferry Bank (and quite considerably so) than in Dundee as a whole, it must be reiterated that employment rates nationally[2] were improving over the April 1971 [3] figures almost throughout the period of the Dundee research and certainly from February 1973 onwards to August 1973. During the period of the Edinburgh research the reverse was true, with national unemployment rates worsening and alw ays higher than the April 1971 figure.[4] The absolute picture suggested by the Census therefore understates the

1. 1971 Census figures.
2. Department of Employment Gazette
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

real, current impact of unemployment in the Edinburgh areas and over-states the position in the Dundee areas. However, as long as the figures are treated with this proviso, the basic argument of relative disadvantage remains intact.

Social Facilities.

As already mentioned, Dundee is rather smaller than Edinburgh, with the journey to the city centre correspondingly shorter, even from outlying estates. Moreover, the leisure facilities generally, and especially for young people, were not only centralised but totally inadequate and outmoded.

This situation put even more pressure on the facilities in the estates themselves and intensified the monotony of week-day leisure since it could not really be balanced out against a week-end of 'entertainment'. Unfortunately, the same formula of 'pubs', though even these were not as evident as in Edinburgh, and 'bookies' existed. Although there was a large community centre in the area, the emphasis on 'community' use meant that its value as an entertainment centre was strictly limited, made even more so by the Warden's reluctance to stage 'Discos'. The youth club aims - quite rightly in terms of the goals of 'further education'- to 'work with' young people, not to 'amuse them'.

There were no Coffee Bars or 'Discos' in the area, though the boys had fond memories of a Cafe called the 'Attila' (after 'Attila the Hun'). Apparently, this had been situated in an old shop on the estate and had been used as a meeting place by the Ferry Bank 'Huns'. From all accounts, the end result had been rather similar to the demise of the Jute Hill Coffee Bar - a series of 'battles'. This 'gang' was quite distinct from the Jute Hill 'Huns' and corresponded to the neighbourhood grouping for the Ferry Bank area (as with the 'YBT' in Harrytown, the 'Terror' in Barrackhill). The 'Tongs', who frequented the Jute Hill Coffee Bar, were from Ferry Bank and acknowledged the 'Huns' as the 'gang' for that area but had formed their own, smaller unit, based on a particular peer group.

Finally, playgrounds and areas suitable for football were almost non-existent and the result was the inevitable sight of the streets being used as 'unofficial' playgrounds. This, of course, was accompanied by litter, glass and, most irritating for the residents, noise.

Jute Hill.

It has already been pointed out that the Coffee Bar which formed the basis of most of my contacts with the subjects in Dundee was located in this area. It was natural therefore that the information gathered here should exceed that from the Ferry Bank area. However, there is another point that must be borne in mind by the reader, namely, the different historical development and present situation of the Jute Hill area. Whereas the other research situations involved large council developments designed originally to rehouse slum dwellers and others in inadequate housing, Jute Hill was itself a blighted area in the process of redevelopment, a 'community' in the throes of destruction. To put it another way, the original residents had largely left to be replaced by a diffuse, shifting population in the older housing and an influx of council tenants in the redeveloped 'Multis' and other local authority housing developments.

Historically,[1] Jute Hill had an independent people of its own and was not just a part of Dundee; in the 17th. Century, its people were weavers of wool and bonnet makers, so it was known as 'Bonnethill'. By the 19th. Century, linen had taken over from wool only to be itself supplanted by jute. With the end of the handlooms, there was a rapid expansion and immigrants from Angus, the Highlands and Ireland came pouring in. Housing was quite inadequate and sanitary conditions appalling.

In fact, by the end of the 19th. Century, the 'stunted, rickety frame of the Dundee jute worker was well-known'. Indeed, even as late as 1939, the poor physique of the children of this area was apparent and it was not until the end of the 1939-45 War that any great strides were taken to improve housing generally.

Population.[2]

At the time of the 1971 Census, the population of the area was 8,935, less than half that of Ferry Bank, and only one-third that of either Harrytown or Barrackhill. 46.2% of the population were males and 53.7% females as compared to a Dundee proportion of 47% males and 52.7% females, a not very significant difference.

However, an analysis of the age structure is rather more interesting since it reveals a trend opposite to that in the other areas studied.

1. C. Morrison, J.S. Watt & T.R. Lee (Eds.): Educational Priority Vol.5 E.P.A.: A Scottish Study: Edinburgh H.M.S.O. 1974 - I am indebted to this publication for its detail on the area.
2. 1971 Census figures unless otherwise stated.

Whereas Ferrybank and Barrackhill had a quite markedly higher than average number of young people, with a corresponding lack of those over 60, and Harrytown showed a trend in this direction, though not so dramatically, the situation in Jute Hill was quite the reverse.

Thus, while Dundee had 33.1% of its population under 20, Jute Hill had only 28.5%. For males under 20 as a % of the male population, the figures were 35.7% for Dundee and 31.2% for Jute Hill. For females, 30.9% of Dundee's female population was under 20 yrs. old, as compared to 26.3% for Jute Hill.

The under-representation of the young is best contrasted with the over-representation of the old, the over 60's. Whereas Dundee had only 18.3% of its population over 60, Jute Hill had 25.7%. This imbalance might be the result of young families moving out of the area while the old stay on until redevelopment forces them to leave.

The Census figures do not give a good indication of mobility and reveal only that there was a slight decrease in the total population in the ten years between 1961-71. This does not show the movement <u>in</u> of new council tenants, <u>out</u> of old residents, and <u>around</u> the area of those in rented housing. A more illuminating insight is revealed by the Educational Priority report on the area[1] which asked all children in P. 4 and P. 5 at the three E.P.A. schools for their addresses in September 1969 and in June 1970, almost a full school year. Those children who lived in the core tenement area were then identified. At the first date, 55 families were in this category but, by the end of the school year, 23 had moved house, 16 without changing school.

<u>Housing</u>.[2]

While the age structure of the population is revealing and distinguishes this area from the others studied, a consideration of the housing is even more illuminating. Thus, there was a very high level of residential density in Jute Hill, with the dwellings at an average of at least 30 to the acre; a figure much in excess of current planning practice.

Moreover, the area is not peripheral like the others but lies immediately adjacent to the central business district. In fact, it is dominated by a belt of jute works running diagonally through it and dividing the area fairly neatly into two housing zones, one of the 19th. Century tenements and the other of pre-war public housing. A

1. C. Morrison et al: op. cit.
2. <u>Note</u>. This section relies heavily on the <u>E.P.A. Report</u> (Morrison et al.)

third type of housing, situated in the middle of the ward and overshadowing the surrounding area, is the massive 'Multis' development.

Most of the tenements were hurriedly built in the 19th. Century when jute began to boom. They are nearly all three or four storeys high with a common stair up from the close that opens out onto the street. The stair goes up to the outside gallery ('plettie'), facing in to a central open space or 'back green'. Some of these central areas had later tenements built in them to form what are known as the 'backlands'.

At the time of research, all these old tenements were scheduled for demolition and were visibly deteriorating. The overall impression was one of squalor and the smell of decaying properties. Indeed, the smell was often not improved by the state of the common toilets which are situated on each stair, one to a floor, usually in a brickbuilt stack added to the outside of the common staircase in the early years of this century.

To the north of these doomed houses, are well-kept, pleasant older tenement blocks housing mainly the families of artisans and 'white collar' workers. Again to the north, there is a council estate of slum clearance families.

But the most striking area of housing is the massive 'Multis' redevelopment project in the heart of the tenement area (only one hundred yards or so from the Coffee Bar), consisting of four 23 storey tower blocks, each containing 110 split-level maisonettes. Along the south side of these large buildings, there is a series of low-rise flats and terraced houses. The 'Multis' were completed by 1968 and the other buildings by 1971.

Again in the north, there is an area of pre-war council housing, mainly of tenement-style buildings, but of a better standard than the private ones. They were built in the 1930's and are accepted as not being up to the standards of modern council accommodation - modernization was being done at the time of the research (early 1970's).

A consideration of the 1971 Census figures (Figure 1), shows the rather different pattern of tenure in the Jute Hill area as compared to the other wards studied. Only half the housing was in fact rented from the council. However, there was once again a small % of owner occupiers (9.5%) and rented accommodation as a whole accounted for a massive 90% of housing.

Figure 1: 1971 Census: Jute Hill: Type of Tenure.

Households.

Type	No.	%
Owner Occupiers	360	9.46
Renting Furnished	90	2.36
Renting Unfurnished	1390	36.53
Council Housing	1965	51.64
Total	3805	99.99

However, the derelict, run-down character of much of the area is not adequately revealed by the Census figures on overcrowding and comparison is complicated by the smaller proportion of housing rented from the council. In fact, considering council housing only, Jute Hill has only 3.8% of households with over 1½ persons to a room, compared with a figure for Dundee city of 6.8% and for Ferry Bank of 11.5%. Of course, the impact of the massive 'Multis' development on these figures must be remembered.

Nevertheless, as in Edinburgh, density of occupation increases when considered for all persons in permanent buildings by the number of persons per room. But again, whereas Ferry Bank had the second greatest density of occupation in the twelve wards (18.7% at over 1½ to a room), Jute Hill was not much above the Dundee average (13.8% at more than 1½ to a room, compared to 11.6% for Dundee) and ranked only fourth in the league table.

However, while the housing may not have been overcrowded on average, much of it was definitely substandard. In 1970, the Dundee Corporation Town Planning Department[1] undertook an extensive survey of pre-1939 housing in relation to various standards laid down in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1969. In particular, they looked at structural stability, the presence of damp, lighting, amenities and cooking facilities and then ranked the houses according to four categories - above satisfactory, below satisfactory, below tolerable and write-offs.

Though the area they studied was rather larger than Jute Hill, their results do shed some light on the appalling state of much of the pre-1939 housing in the area, especially the tenement blocks. Only 5% of houses could be deemed satisfactory and a staggering 76% were intolerable. (See Figure 2.)

Without labouring the deficiency of the housing too much but making the point that Jute Hill's housing is in many respects inferior

1. E.P.A. Report: op. cit.

Figure 2; Dundee Town Planning Dept./Assessment pre-1939 Housing.

Category	No.	As % of total pre-1939 Housing
Satisfactory	460	5
Not Satisfactory	1615	18
Not tolerable	4081	45
Write-Offs	2826	31

to that in the other areas studied, a consideration of the 1971 Census reveals the absence of the most basic amenities.

Obviously, the Dundee figures are affected by the sheer quantity of poor housing in the city but they never fall below 80% and usually nearer 90% of households having exclusive use of the three basic amenities of hot water, fixed bath or shower and inside flush toilet. In the predominantly council housing area of Ferry Bank (as in Harrytown and Barrackhill in Edinburgh), not less than 97% of households have exclusive use of these amenities.

In Jute Hill, on the other hand, only 65.2% of all tenures have exclusive use of a hot water supply and a staggering 32.7% have no supply at all. Even council houses have nearly 10% of households with no supply, while those houses rented unfurnished by private landlords have 65.5% without a hot water supply. The owner occupiers were not much better off with only 68.4% having exclusive use and 30.4% with no supply.

With regard to a fixed bath or shower, the position was even worse. Considering all tenures, 45.6% of households had none at all. Indeed, all types of tenure do badly in this respect with a dramatic 91% of those houses rented unfurnished from a private landlord or company having no fixed bath or shower and 72.2% of owner-occupied houses falling in the same category. Even in council houses, 6.1% were without this amenity.

This pattern is repeated with regard to an inside flush toilet, a generally-accepted requirement of modern housing. Only 73.6% of all tenures had exclusive use as also a disturbing 43.9% of those renting unfurnished from a private landlord or company. Even with owner-occupiers, only 68.4% of households had exclusive use of an inside toilet. Obviously, in older housing such as predominates in this area, many of the houses have an outside toilet but it must be remembered that in the tenements there is usually only one common

toilet to a floor and the figures for shared use do not reveal how many you share with! (20.7% of all tenures had shared use of an outside toilet.)

A summary of the housing position might be that Jute Hill stands out in sharp contrast to the other areas studied as an area in decline, with much of its housing totally inadequate and a general air of dereliction reflected in the demolition work going on all around. Indeed, in some boarded-up streets, the only sign of human habitation is the sight of bright but oddly pathetic curtains still adorning one or two buildings.

Employment.[1]

The housing situation reflects the employment position. A very high 15.1% of economically active males were unemployed in April 1971 as compared to a Dundee rate of 10% and 13.5% in Ferry Bank. Again, while Jute Hill had 4.9% of the total economically active male population of Dundee, it had 7.4% of the city's total male unemployed.

Females were not much better off with 12.3% of economically active females unemployed; a figure far higher than even Ferry Bank's high of 8.0%. In fact, with 5% of the total economically active female population of Dundee, Jute Hill had 8% of Dundee's total female unemployed.

Assuming that youth employment rates were consistently worse than the general rate - as illustrated by the Census - the prospects for young people in Jute Hill must have been quite desperate. Moreover, this was in spite of the area's proximity to the central business district of the city. Even allowing for the upturn in the national unemployment rates[2] during the Dundee period of research, the relative position in the area must have been a continuing disadvantage to young people. Remember that Dundee's rate of male unemployment in April 1971 was significantly higher than the rate for Scotland (10% compared to 7.5%)[3] whereas Edinburgh's was lower (6.4%). It is not unreasonable to expect that it would continue to run at a relatively high level unless there were a significant change in the economic structure of the city.

Social Facilities.

It has already been pointed out that Jute Hill borders the city centre and thus there is ready access for the teenage population to the 'attractions' of the central area. Unfortunately, again as has

1. 1971 Census unless otherwise stated.
2. Dept. of Employment Gazette
3. Dundee figure from the Census/Scotland from Dept. of Employment Gazette.

already been pointed out, the leisure outlets, even in Dundee city centre, were so limited as to alarm even the more conservative among the population. As will be seen in later chapters, this was a factor in the incidents involving rival groupings in the central area, which tended to act as a local meeting place for the Jute Hill boys.

Certainly, in the area itself, there was little to attract anyone; the most 'lively' entertainment was provided by the Coffee Bar that I ran and even that shared the derelict atmosphere of its surroundings situated as it was in a tenement due for demolition. Young children of necessity played in the streets - there were no playgrounds apart from an adventure playground in the middle of the area - but they seemed mainly to be concentrated in the areas of council housing rather than in the tenements; the result was often an eerie stillness when passing through the streets at night and even during daylight hours.

Conclusion: The Areas.

As will be outlined in later chapters, the theoretical emphasis of this study centres around the interrelationship between culture (in its 'material' and 'expressive' forms) and material circumstance. The suggestion will be that the symbolic adaptation of 'ganging' is interconnected not only with the 'material' adaptation to inequality in general (i.e. the conditions of manual labour), but also with the particular material circumstance in Edinburgh and Dundee at the time of the research (1971-73). With this in mind, the adequate description of the areas has been a priority for future theoretical discussion and development.

Thus, in the case of the above descriptions, some attempt has been made to outline the characteristics of each area with regard to population, housing, employment and social facilities. Although there have been certain findings in common, in particular, that all the areas suffer from a high unemployment rate and might be regarded as working class, differences have also been discovered. In fact, it is not intended to overstress the homogeneity of the areas, since all were individual in character and others, like Barrackhill, were so large as to constitute a mix of older and new developments. In short, it is hoped that these differences have not been eclipsed by the dominating facts of council housing, inadequate leisure facilities, high unemployment and working class residence.

Thus, while Barrackhill and Ferry Bank had a significantly imbalanced age structure with regard to the city average, in particular, a higher than average number of young people, in Harrytown, this trend existed, but not so obviously, though it is possible that the statistics here were affected by the higher proportion of owner-occupiers (13.3% as compared to 8.5% in Barrackhill and 7.7% in Ferry Bank). On the other hand, in Jute Hill, this situation was reversed with a marked under-representation of the young and over-representation of those over 60.

With regard to housing, greatest overcrowding was discovered in Ferry Bank and Barrackhill, in spite of the large concentrations of council housing in these areas. Jute Hill, where one might have expected overcrowding with the large numbers of run-down but privately-rented houses, was in fact not above the Dundee average to any significant extent in this respect. Again, of course, the dereliction of this area was in sharp contrast to the other areas which, statistically at least, possessed a high % exclusive use of the basic amenities.

Briefly then, each area had its own special characteristics, expressed in the image held by the residents and visitors, though the two views did not necessarily coincide. The experience of living in each estate/scheme/area was qualitatively different and certainly differentially evaluated by those with a vested interest i.e. the residents and prospective tenants. However, as suggested above, all the areas housed large concentrations of the working class as indicated (perhaps superficially, it is for the reader to judge) by the unemployment rates, predominance of council housing or older housing in decline, and the prevailing patterns of leisure.

In particular, the older council developments, that is, large areas of Ferry Bank, Harrytown and Barrackhill, could be regarded as areas in a state of gradual deterioration due to outmoded design, current housing policies and the selectivity of potential tenants. Certainly, the visual evidence of this decline was obvious to all, with the 'official' reason invariably being the initial origins of the residents - slums, areas of substandard housing, redevelopment areas - deterioration was due to 'neglect'; 'a lot of these people <u>can't cope</u> with <u>decent</u> housing.'

On the other hand, another view might be that the consistency of this deterioration in diverse areas and cities might be based on

rather more than the 'inadequacies' of the tenants. It has been suggested as a possible alternative explanation that large council developments, especially those 'cursed' with a design that sets up a permanent conflict between the 'public' and the 'private', have suffered from the inability of the residents to exert 'control' over common land, playgrounds, and even gardens and 'stairs' where these are subject to the 'public/private' dilemma. The tenant's position as tenant is often interpreted individually as an absence of 'responsibility' - 'the council should sort it out'. When put into practice, this philosophy means that 'problems' in the area must be passed on to 'higher authority' and, if they can't sort it out, then nothing can be done. Deterioration sets in and a vicious circle is set up of decline, less 'desirability' as a housing area, fewer potential tenants, allocation of tenancies to 'problem' families, more deterioration, and so on in an increasing spiral.

Naturally, this decline tends to result in the migration of the more socially aspiring families and this in turn stimulates the development of these areas as 'problems', facing 'multiple social deprivations' (in the language of social workers) - unemployment, crime, child neglect, and other social 'difficulties', tend to cluster together. Again, of course, the more strongly the area is 'labelled' as suffering from 'problem families', the less likely it is to attract new tenants who might upgrade the area. The most drastic results of this process can be seen in areas like Barrackhill, where whole streets stand almost empty and boarded-up and talk among the authorities turns to 'demolition'.

Jute Hill, of course, must be singled out as distinct from the other areas in character and especially with regard to housing. Moreover, the 'traditions' of the area lingered on, especially among the older people (who, as has been said, were over-represented in the population). The E.P.A. Report sums up this differential character quite well.[1]

> "(Jute Hill)...is a predominantly working class area with much very poor housing, apart from the new high-rise blocks (which in turn bring their own problems for parents with young families). It has had a history of its own, which made its inhabitants feel they had a local identity, but its old stability had been shaken by industrial change

1.C. Morrison et al: E.P.A. Report: op. cit. P.16.

and by migration to new districts of corporation housing." (My emphasis)

Ironically, Jute Hill is an example of the old, inner-city areas that provide the initial populations of many council housing schemes, such as Ferry Bank, Harrytown etc; these massive 'modern' developments are supposed to hold the answer to <u>its</u> problems and to the squalor of <u>its</u> living conditions. But, if this chapter has accomplished anything, it should have made clear the fact that re-housing is <u>not</u> the end of the story.

The 'brutal' truth of the matter is that the descriptions provided suggest that redevelopment, especially in the form of large council housing estates with little or no social facilities, is often just the beginning of another cycle of decline and deterioration. Just as the residents of Jute Hill had little control over their destiny and that of their area - many left extremely reluctantly - so they may well suffer a similar lack of control in the developments designed to eliminate housing as a social problem.

In short, although all the areas manifest internal differences and it would be wrong to force them into a uniformity which can be quoted as 'evidence' for this thesis, nevertheless, a point which stands out is that a major issue is the housing/rehousing of the working classes (no-one would pretend that the priority in council house building is the provision of homes for the middle classes). In this context, redevelopment, with its emphasis on the resident <u>as tenant</u>, combined with the almost 'statutory' inadequate social and leisure facilities, sets up a control dilemma for the residents with regard to the fabric of the estate, a dilemma which, unfortunately, is often resolved by a demarcation between the 'public' and the 'private'. The struggle to maintain the gardens/streets/shopping precints/play areas etc. is often abandoned with the visual results outlined in this chapter - <u>deterioration sets in</u>.

Finally, it must be reiterated that the importance of an adequate description of the areas is based in large measure on the fact that the boys lived there in a way more '<u>total</u>' than is generally imagined. 'Life' tended to be spent out 'on the streets', adapting the limitations of the area wherever possible. The dearth of leisure facilities made this appropriation of the streets by the youthful population a

'fact of life' for the older residents who, in many parts, concentrated their efforts on maintaining the 'privacy' of the home, abandoning the 'public' areas to the control of others - usually the 'Housing' (i.e. the Council) and the Police.[1]

1. See Chapter 4 - The Police as 'Pressure'- for a description of the role of the police as 'control'.

CHAPTER TWO.

TOWARDS A CULTURAL ANALYSIS.

The dilemma facing this chapter is the need to give the phenomenon of 'ganging' a theoretical context without becoming 'trapped' in the complexity of theory and perspective at present proliferating in the field of deviancy. However, a further difficulty is the largely ex post facto character of much of the initial theorising and the conceptual frameworks to be presented in later chapters, especially the discussion of the concept of 'culture'.

Thus, when I began this study (late 1970), a review of the existing literature left me only with a strong sense of what I did not want to do, that is, develop a theoretical interpretation of 'ganging' based on 'subcultural' explanation, 'difference' and 'pathology'. Although I had a powerful but vague sense of the need to 'tell it how it is', based on my preliminary contacts with 'gang members', a well-articulated research framework for accomplishing this was not readily available.

Indeed, as field work progressed, I became increasingly conscious of the need for a 'cultural' approach in which the 'material' and 'symbolic' elements in the boys' lives could be related and explored. In fact, by the time I began writing up the material, it had become plain that other researchers had experienced similar dissatisfactions and had begun to create a number of approaches (especially 'radical' criminology, phenomenalism, and cultural studies) that paralleled my as yet vague ideas concerning the complex interrelationship between the individual and the 'structures' in which he moves.

Thus, in general terms, there had been a trend in deviancy theory away from etiology and 'correction' to a 'wider' perspective. Even 'traditional' criminology, which continued to show a concern with the empirical discovery and 'validation' of factors affecting delinquency (not necessarily a bad thing), had become more receptive to the complexity of the issues involved.

However, my increasing interest in the centrality of symbol and the complex relationship between 'culture' and material circumstance was paralleled by an awareness of the dangers of any attempted

synthesis with regard to these emerging theoretical approaches. Indeed, the priority given to material circumstance in Edinburgh and Dundee underlined an acceptance that phenomena addressed in research studies vary through time and from place to place. Thus, a central point to be elaborated in the next chapter is the dialectical and continuing relationship between man and the structures in which he moves, the material conditions of his existence. Any attempt at comparison, let alone synthesis, is rendered immediately 'problematic' by potentially different underlying 'material'/structural conditions.

What follows in this chapter, therefore, is not an attempt to create a synthesis or even a theoretical approach - that is reserved for a later, more detailed discussion of an 'alternative' view of 'culture'. Rather, it is a selective review of the deviance literature in which an attempt is made to identify those initial elements (i.e. 'subcultural' theory and its critique) which led to my cautious embrace of a 'cultural' perspective and those later developments (labelling, 'radical' criminology, phenomenalism and cultural studies) which have enabled the clarification and justification of ideas that arose out of the actual experience of living and working with these youngsters in 1971-1973.

The result is an approach which tries to incorporate the strengths found in the broad, structural interests of contemporary marxisant approaches and the 'integrity' of those perspectives which insist we treat ('appreciate') the actors as sentient, creative beings. In this way, a 'cultural' explanation can be developed that allows the boys to work with the fabric of their material circumstance in order ultimately to come to an accommodation with the rules and conventions of contemporary society.

Thus, the present need is simply to illustrate the general process by which I arrived at this 'cultural' perspective through a selective consideration of the principal areas of theoretical development in deviancy theorisation. The emphasis is therefore not on 'delinquency' or 'deviancy' as such; the priority throughout will be the 'rediscovery' of symbolic ('cultural') structures as a means of adapting to the 'material' constraints fairly pointed out by 'subcultural' theorists and fruitfully extended through a sustained critique by their 'successors' in the labelling, 'radical', phenomenalist and 'cultural' schools.

However, although perspectives having such diverse priorities as etiology, dynamic class interest and power, 'appreciation', social reaction, and symbolic adaptation through 'style', tell us a great deal about the complexity of man's relationship to 'structure' and the quality and nature of his interaction with others, they do not, ultimately, give us a view of 'culture' that can cope easily with the complexity of contemporary society. Their approach tends finally to be partial rather than total, with limitations (as in 'radical' criminology) often self-imposed.

Aside therefore from the general purpose of illustrating the route by which I arrived at the need for a 'cultural' analysis, a parallel intention in this chapter is to suggest the priority of a more adequate conceptualization of 'culture' than is suggested in work that otherwise has in many ways supplemented, encouraged and extended theoretical development in this study. However, discussion and elaboration of an 'alternative' conceptual framework requires the increased length of the next chapter to be adequately presented and will therefore be 'passed over' in the following pages.

Finally, a note of caution with regard to the format of the discussion, namely, the neat separation of the major theoretical areas into a 'historical' pattern. This, of course, is in the interests of order and convenience and should not be taken to imply a belief in a strict 'evolutionary' process of theoretical progression, with each 'theory' superseded by a rather more 'complete' and less 'deficient' approach.

'Subcultural' Theory.

It must be stressed that there is no intention to be strictly historical. Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, the base point for discussion is taken to be the emergence of 'subcultural' theory (1955-1966 approximately).[1] Before that time, in the 1930's and 40's, the 'Chicago Tradition' of criminology had dominated the field with its theories of cultural transmission and culture conflict.[2]

1. For example see: R.A. Cloward & L.E. Ohlin: Delinquency & Opportunity: 1961 Routledge & Kegan Paul.
   A.K. Cohen: Delinquent Boys: Glencoe, Ill. The Free Press 1955.
   W.B. Miller: 'Lower Class Culture as Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency': J. Social Issues Vol.14 No.3 1958 PP.5-19.
2. For example see: C.R. Shaw & M.D. McKay: Juvenile Delinquency & Urban Areas: University of Chicago Press 1942 (Rev. Ed. 1969)
   T. Sellin: Culture Conflict & Crime: N.Y. Social Science Research Council 1938.

"At the present time, 'subcultural' theory would appear to have been "'outmoded' by a whelter of criticism from later theorists, in particular, Matza and the 'radical' criminologists.[1] It has been variously described, or more appropriately, 'abused', as 'correctionalist', 'limited', 'one-sided', or just biased. Indeed, its very base has been questioned with a flurry of empirical work designed to show, for example, that the working classes do not have a monopoly of crime and that the problem of delinquency is therefore more complex - at least in its class distribution - than is commonly supposed.

However, the 'demolition' of the subcultural view as an adequate description of delinquency tends to overshadow the impetus given to a broader theorisation by this critique of its 'deficiencies'. On a general level, the dangers of a search for 'causes' in terms of the 'existent' are now fairly obvious.[2]

> "Traditional theories of deviance are essentially non-structural and ahistorical in their mode of analysis. By restricting investigation to factors which are manipulable within existing structural arrangements these theories embrace a correctional perspective."

Although the 'Marxist' has tended to be dismissive, there has been almost a research 'industry' following in the wake of the major publications of Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin, and Miller, aimed at empirically testing their hypotheses, in particular, the prevalence of 'anomie', 'status frustration', and 'subcultural differences' in norms and values. The importance of this research lies not in the validation or otherwise of the central tenets of 'subcultural' theory, but in the invariably tentative and confused nature of its conclusions, for example, Clark and Wenninger.[3]

> "Miller's theory has received support in that significant differences can be found between the focal concerns of the lower and middle classes. However, these differences are not great which also tends to support the position of Merton and others that values are essentially similar throughout the social strata."

1. See: D. Matza: Delinquency & Drift: John Wiley & Sons 1964. Or, for a 'radical' view: I. Taylor, P. Walton, J. Young: The New Criminology: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973.
2. Stephen Spitzer: 'Towards a Marxian Theory of Deviance': Social Problems June 1975 Vol.22/5 P.638.
3. J. Clark & E.P. Wenninger: 'Goal Orientations and Illegal Behaviour among Juveniles': Social Forces Vol.42 1963 P.49.

Note. Of course, these are but a few examples of the critique of 'subcultural' theory, its empirical validation and theoretical extension.

In short, it proved difficult to demonstrate empirically the notion of either a 'consensus' or enclosed class cultures with a separate value system. Reality has invariably turned out to be rather more complex than theory has suggested. Again, the idea of a 'commitment' to delinquency which flows naturally from the work of Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and, to a certain extent, Miller, has proved extremely difficult to demonstrate in the field with a surfeit of studies but little consistency of results.

Apart, of course, from the wider issues implied above by Spitzer, it is <u>in the field</u> that the critique of 'subcultural' theory proves most useful in two main areas. First, there is the real place of 'delinquency' in the life of the adolescent, with the implied imbalance involved in studying a limited area of behaviour (infraction) without reference to the totality of social interaction. The result tends to be the 'isolation' of the delinquent from his cultural context and the elevation of action (delinquency) to a social state (the delinquent).[1]

> "Current theories of delinquency, because they have maintained the positivist assumptions of constraint and differentiation, may explain, though always inadequately, the juvenile's deviance, <u>but at the cost of leaving us bewildered by his commonplace behaviour</u>." (My emphasis)

In other words, the working class adolescent is, in reality, only occasionally 'delinquent' and this characteristic can not be used to effectively separate him from either his peers or those amongst whom he lives. 'Delinquency', in short, is not a life-style but merely one element in a broader pattern.

Matza reinforces this point with the assertion that the 'integration' of the 'delinquent' into the community is illustrated by the process of 'maturation'. If the 'delinquent' is committed, as 'subcultural' theory implies, then how does one account for the often-remarked tendency for him to 'grow out of it?'[2]

> "Sociological theories....do no better (than personality theories) in accounting for maturational reform....the theory of subcultural delinquency...finds it especially difficult."

Early 'subcultural' accounts thus tended to minimise 'cultural' factors, in particular, the extension of adolescent cultural forms into 'maturity'. Thus, Knight and Osborne, while denying the influence

1. D. Matza: <u>Delinquency and Drift</u>: op. cit. P.27.
2. Ibid. P.24.

of maturation on delinquency, illustrate the continuity of cultural forms.[1]

> "Although getting married did not appear to reduce delinquency, it did effect a reduction in some of the social habits associated with delinquency, notably drinking, sexual promiscuity, prohibited drug use and time spent away from home, but heavy smoking, aggressive behaviour, hostility to police and liability to unemployment were not reduced." (My emphasis)

An alternative interpretation would suggest a 'cultural' transition from working class adolescent behaviour to an adult pattern of working class concerns - not adult 'criminality'. 'Heavy smoking', 'unemployment', 'hostility to the police' etc., have often been remarked on as fairly standard features of working class neighbourhoods rather than indicators of 'deviance'.

Again, another example of the continuity of cultural forms is provided by Willis in his description of the affinity between the cultural 'styles' of the 'lads' ('counter-school culture') and those of the largely unskilled workers they join in the places of work ('shop floor culture').[2]

> "The systematic cultural self-preparation of the 'lads' for a certain kind of work marks them out from the 'ear'oles', not only in terms of school work, but also in terms of their expectations." (My emphasis)

In their concentration on 'masculine chauvinism' and their 'attempt to gain informal control of the work process', the 'lads' display in work some of the features of 'counter-school culture'. Moreover, as Willis points out:[3]

> "The distinctive form of language and highly developed intimidatory humour of the shopfloor is also very reminiscent of counter-school culture."

The suggestion then is that on one level the critique of 'sub-cultural' theory places the 'delinquent' firmly back in his 'culture', requiring a more complex and adequate theorisation than an over-simplified approach based on infraction and 'isolation'. The priority must be a wider consideration of 'delinquency as one aspect of working class life related to adolescence and peer relationships as well as to life in the 'neighbourhood' - 'delinquency' is rightfully

1. B.J. Knight, S.E. Osborne & D.J. West: 'Early Marriage and Criminal Tendency in Males': Brit. J. Criminology 17 1977 PP. 348-360.
2. P. Willis: Learning to Labour: Saxon House: 1977 P.97.
3. Ibid. P.55.

reduced to infraction/action from 'life style'.

Finally, as well as suggesting - by omission - the 'cultural' context of the working class 'delinquent' (the major focus of this study), the 'search for differences' undertaken by the 'subcultural' theorists and their empirical followers has turned up useful areas of empirical priority, in particular, the home, school, and the neighbourhood, with Downes[1] adding employment and the concept of 'dissociation' to this list. Skirting the issue of etiology, the net result of developing criticism has been a new emphasis on a 'broader' perspective, expressed in an increasing concern with the 'cultural' location of the 'delinquent'.

Matza and 'Naturalism'.

In continuing the trend towards a 'cultural' rather than a 'structural' view of the 'delinquent', a discussion in which the very concept of delinquency as 'commitment', as a differentiating factor, comes under attack, Matza's work stands out as a significant milestone. Briefly, he centred his attack on 'subcultural' theory around the crucial issue of 'appreciation'.[2] In this endeavour, he has been followed by other writers who have attempted to 'tell it how it is', rather than address the issues of grand theory; who have attempted to show life as it appears to the working class adolescent.[3]

The importance of Matza's work can be summed up in his insistence on bringing the 'delinquent' back into a purposeful and complex relationship with his environment, a relationship which can vary enormously in the degree of control exercised by the individual but never results in a total loss of the human quality of 'freedom'.[4]

> "...Frequently man is wholly adaptive, as if he were just organic being. And sometimes, though very rarely, he is wholly reactive, as if a mere object. But mere reactivity or adaptation should not be confused with the distinctively human condition. They are better seen as an alienation or exhaustion of that condition."

The value of his exhortation to 'tell it how it is' is shown in the work of researchers such as Gill and Parker[5] who attempt to give,

1. D. Downes: The Delinquent Solution: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1966.
2. See: D. Matza: Becoming Deviant: Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs 1969. Also, Delinquency & Drift: op. cit.
3. For example: H.J. Parker: A View From The Boys: Newton Abbott, David & Charles 1974/ Owen Gill: Luke Street: The MacMillan Press Ltd. 1977.
4. D. Matza: Becoming Deviant; op. cit. P.92.
5. Op. cit.

as Parker's title indicates, 'A View From The Boys'. Put another way, they attempt to convey the meaning of delinquency for the working class adolescent. The priority is 'empathy' and 'appreciation' rather than etiology and correction.[1]

> "A basic difficulty with a correctional perspective is that it systematically interferes with the capacity to empathise and thus comprehend the subject of inquiry. Only through appreciation can the texture of social patterns.... be understood and analysed." (My emphasis)

While this seems a useful balance to earlier formulations, the creation of the priority of 'naturalism' can imply (if over-emphasised) a rejection of constraint, thus setting up new limitations based on a one-sided acceptance of the subject's view of reality, although it is debatable how far this was Matza's intention.[2]

However, of greater immediate interest is his assertion that a simple oppositional view of 'delinquent values' is not adequate;[3] 'culture' cannot be neatly divided up into middle class conventional values on the one hand and 'deviant values' on the other, with infraction deciding to which cluster one adhered. On the contrary,

> "Conventional culture does not consist simply of ascetic puritanism, middle class morality, or the boy scout oath. (It)...is complex and many-sided."

Thus, a simple, dichotomic image of society, as comprising middle and working class 'cultures', is based on theoretical 'neatness', rather than on empirical reality. Such a division tends to conclusions based on 'difference' and to over-simplify issues so that deviance can be seen either as a failure to conform to dominant middle class values or as an adherence to inherently deviant working class values - both suggestions passing over the complexity of the interrelationship between 'cultures'.

In other words, as well as introducing the concept of meaning for the adolescent and, most important, outlining a purposeful and creative relationship between the individual and his environment, Matza also suggests the necessarily complex interrelationship between the 'delinquent' and the 'culture' of the society in which he lives.

1. D. Matza: Becoming Deviant: op. cit. P.15.
2. For empirical judgements on Matza, see for example:
   Albert J. Velarde: 'Do Delinquents really Drift?': PP.23-29 in British Journal of Criminology Vol.18 1978.
   M. Hindelang: 'Moral Evaluations of Illegal Behaviour': Social Problems 21 PP.370-385.
3. D. Matza: Delinquency & Drift: op. cit. P.37.

the fact that 'delinquency' is a minor element (mere 'action') in the totality of social behaviour, even for the 'delinquent'. A concentration on infraction, therefore, can only disguise the detail of this interrelationship between the 'deviant' and his cultural context, which would include 'conventional' as well as 'deviant' values. The 'delinquent' is at least aware of the 'conventional' imperatives to 'conform', hence the need for the 'techniques of neutralisation' which play a crucial part in allowing adolescents to 'drift' into delinquency, diminishing 'guilt' through one or the other means e.g. condemning the condemners, denial of the victim etc.

The empirical validation of these 'techniques of neutralisation' has proved slow in coming with several critics suggesting that they are nothing more than 'excuses' put forward after arrest to avoid punishment.[1] However, as will be seen in the next chapter, in Edinburgh and Dundee, there was evidence to suggest the practical operation of these 'techniques' as an attempt to justify action (i.e. infraction). Their use at least implied an awareness of an ideal morality (or, in 'subcultural' terms, middle class morality). Thus, generally, it is felt that the main impetus of Matza's work is towards a greater 'appreciation' of the 'delinquent' in his 'cultural' context, a more realistic appraisal of the limited place of infraction in his life and, most important, the recognition of the complexity of conventional culture, a 'complexity' which demands a more 'sophisticated' analysis than is offered by the 'subcultural' theorists' neat separation of 'dominant' and 'deviant' values.

Labelling Theory.

The priority of 'appreciation' continues in the empirical work of the labelling theorists who endeavour, through description, to outline the processes by which individuals come to be defined as 'deviant', ultimately accept that definition and act on it. Warren and Johnson summarize neatly the position of labelling with regard to more 'traditional' theory.[2]

> "With the switch from survey to field methods as the 'most appropriate', the temporal focus of the labelling theorists shifts from the past (etiological concerns), and future

1. For Example: L.J. Siegel, S.A. Ralthus, C.A. Ruppert: 'Values and Delinquent Youth.....': British Journal of Criminology Vol.13 1973 P.243.
2. C.A.B. Warren & J.M. Johnson: P.72 in R. Scott & J. Douglas (Eds.) Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance: N.Y. Basic Books 1972.

(curative concerns) to the present (descriptive concerns)." (My emphasis)

Apart from this insistence on adequate description of the processes of interaction between the 'deviant' and significant others, labelling is perhaps most important for its introduction of the concept of social reaction and for its assertion that the 'rules' themselves form part of the research situation. In this, it corrects the failure of earlier work to see that the agencies of control are not given and immutable. Of course, as in 'Naturalism', there has been a tendency to imbalance in the application of this reciprocal relationship between subject and controller in the field, sometimes resulting in a concentration on 'reaction' to the detriment of the deviant's creativity and meaningful adaptation to the 'rules'.[1]

In fact, at its worst, especially when seen as a 'theory', labelling is absurdly limiting and as 'deterministic' as earlier theories. 'Radical' criminologists are particularly scathing with regard to this over-emphasis on social reaction.[2]

> "The sequential emphasis has been enshrined as a new mythology, involving an assumed relationship...between action, reaction and amplification in deviant processing."

However, the rigid and narrow interpretation of labelling as a 'theory' tends to overshadow its valuable contribution to the widening of the area of empirical investigation. Ken Plummer suggests that an acceptance of the limited etiological value of this theorisation and its recognition as a 'perspective' rather than as a definitive approach to deviance will result in a useful extension of empirical work.[3]

> "In summary, although it is true that to date labelling theory has not usually fared well at the hands of empirical researchers, this is largely due to the narrow interpretation given to the theory by the researchers. When viewed as an orientating perspective, the approach becomes important as suggestive of a wide range of areas demanding empirical attack." (My emphasis)

Accepting the various recommendations that 'labelling' is merely an hŏuristic attempt to uncover the complexity of the relationship between the actor and control agencies and that much of the critique

1. For example, see: Andrew Scull: Social Control and the Amplification of Deviance: in R.A. Scott & J. Douglas: op. cit. P.306.
2. I. Taylor, P. Walton & J. Young: The New Criminology: op. cit. P.160.
3. Ken Plummer: Misunderstanding Labelling Perspectives: P. 118 in David Downes & Paul Rock (Eds.): Deviant Interpretations: Martin Robertson 1979.

of its approach can be attributed to an over-rigid interpretation of the link between action and reaction, there is another area of the application of this perspective which, although not emphasised by labelling theorists, centres usefully around the use of reaction as 'moral statement' on a societal level rather than on the level of the individual or the group. This is a more diffuse application of labelling than the processes of definition as 'homosexual', 'marijuana smoker' - or 'delinquent', but nevertheless, its importance as an element in the dissemination of 'key images' should not be understated. In particular, in periods of uncertainty, reaction on a societal level through the media provides an opportunity for re-affirmation of position on 'key' issues. (A further, detailed discussion of 'key images' and their importance to a 'cultural' analysis will be elaborated in the next chapter.)

In short, what is the general role of labelling in maintaining a 'consensus?' How, in fact, does reaction (or assumed reaction) set up limits to behaviour? In this regard, labelling theory has much to offer in illustrating the subtle ways in which 'moral panics', for example, allow an opportunity for moral statements on confused and ambivalent, or simply sensitive, issues such as mugging,[1] race, social security 'scroungers', and other areas of social concern and dilemma. Warren and Johnson, for example, imply this neglected area in their critique of labelling sociologists.[2]

> "...labelling sociologists have paid inadequate attention to the question of 'core values' or key moral meanings in American society, and to the empirical relationship between deviant identities, deviant acts, acts of labelling and symbolic labelling." (My emphasis)

In terms of this study, labelling theory needs to assert its concern with more than the relationship between the actor and those 'agencies' defining his behaviour as 'deviant'. Theoretical and empirical priority should extend to the diffuse symbolic mechanism of 'shared images' (of the family, work, crime, etc.) as well as to individual stigma. (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of 'key images'.)

Thus, Robert Scott suggests a wider view of labelling, implying the need for a 'cultural' approach. He mentions a 'symbolic universe' as in some way protected by reaction. The stigmatization of 'deviants',

1. See: S. Hall et al: Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State & Law and Order: 1978 MacMillan Press Ltd.
2. Warren & Johnson: P.89 in R. Scott & J. Douglas: op. cit.

as well as indicating the limits of tolerated behaviour, also provides a way of forcing meaning onto the complexity of contemporary industrial society.[1]

> "This property ('Labelling') is conferred upon an individual whenever others detect in his behaviour, appearance, or simply his existence, a significant transgression of the boundaries of the symbolic universe by which the inherent disorder of human existence is made to appear orderly and meaningful." (My emphasis)

Thus, the attachment of labels involves more than a process of reciprocal interaction between the actor and the agencies of control; it indicates also the mechanisms by which an increasingly diversified society maintains its 'core values'. Scott, unfortunately, does not go into detail on this issue but the concept of a central symbolic cluster of 'core values' is of interest to the conceptual framework of this study and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Again, Plummer implies another concern of a 'cultural' approach but fails to elaborate. Talking about 'deviance' and the necessity for closer consideration of the 'rules' themselves, he draws a useful distinction between 'societal' and 'situational' deviance.[2]

> "While in one sense, societal deviance steers towards absolute categories of deviance, situational deviance steers towards a more relativistic stance."
> (My emphasis)

Thus, 'societal' deviance involves infraction of norms supporting 'core values' e.g. crimes such as murder, rape, child abuse, and so on, which are universally abhorred - there is a moral 'consensus' on their deviant nature. 'Situational' deviance is more complex and takes into consideration the relationship between the 'rules' and the 'situation' - local adaptations may occur affected by circumstance. For example, Plummer suggests that 'homos', 'queers' etc, are disparaged on a societal level but, in a particular situation, such as on a college campus, they may be tolerated and even gain a certain 'acceptable' notoriety.

Again, in the case of this study, there were instances of behaviour, such as 'fighting' and 'heavy' drinking, condemned on a societal level but given a degree of acceptability in the more restricted situation of the working class housing estate. In Chapter 4 (The 'Gang':

1.R. Scott: P.22 in R. Scott & J. Douglas: op. cit.
2.Ken Plummer: 'Misunderstanding Labelling Perspectives': P.98 in Downes & Rock: Deviant Interpretations: op. cit.

A Sceptical View), there is a discussion of 'hardness' and 'madness' which suggests the importance of the situation in the definition of 'acceptable' behaviour. 'Madness' (extreme violence) may be condemned by the boys but, in particular situations, especially where it was necessary to 'win', they were not averse to 'bottlin' their opponent - without criticism by their peers.

In short, on this level of the normative interpretation of the 'rules' and the insights this gives us into the maintenance of 'order' and the adaptation to circumstance, labelling 'theory' points in the direction of a 'cultural' rather than a strictly interactionist perspective, especially with regard to the concept of 'shared images'. Moreover, as will be seen, 'key' or 'shared' images form a central element in the conceptual scheme of culture as comprising 'material' and 'expressive' elements.

'Radical' Criminology.

Again, at the risk of appearing to favour a crude 'historical' view of the development of deviancy theory, 'radical' criminology drew much of its initial impetus from its critique of 'subcultural' theory which it asserted to be 'determinist', 'correctionalist', and absurdly limiting. To summarize the benefits of this approach, it offered a further extension of the subject matter of deviancy theorisation, bringing in the elements of 'power' and 'structural inequality'.[1]

> "Materialist Criminology must set about the task of seeking to explain the continuance, the innovation or the abolition of legal and social norms in terms of the interests they support, the functions they serve to particular material arrangements or production in propertied societies, realising that the legal norms in question are inextricably connected with the developing contradictions in such societies."

This attack on the 'traditional' concerns of criminology was accompanied by a parallel critique of the form of 'positivist' research. It was implied that much of the 'blame' for the 'consensual' view of society lay with sociologists' obsession with 'objectivity', which when put into practice in the field resulted in the researcher seeing only what is, not what might be. The 'radical' approach to theory must therefore be accompanied by a 'radical' approach to

1.I. Taylor, P. Walton & J. Young (Eds.): Critical Criminology: 1975 Routledge & Kegan Paul P.56. See Also: The New Criminology: op. cit.

method.[1]

> "Radical social theory and traditional social theory are different...in their form. Rather than necessarily being systematically formulated and highly analytical, radical social theory tends to be less orderly, more descriptive and highly critical."

Whatever one's qualms about the implications of a less rigorous approach to methodology, 'radical' criminology, at least initially, seemed to have a lot to offer. In particular, it presented a dynamic view of inequality, class interest and power lacking in earlier formulations - even in the later theoretical perspective of 'labelling' which at its most general could be stretched only to a consideration of societal control structures based on reaction. 'Subcultural' theory, of course, described inequality in contemporary society but as static structure, without any reference to power or dynamic class interest. Its emphasis was on the existent and the adjustment (or otherwise) of the individual to that 'reality'. Thus, 'mitigating' circumstances (such as poor home, environment etc.) could be introduced but not in any dynamic sense. As a result, concepts of 'deviance' and 'conformity' were introduced and assigned to the working and middle classes respectively without reference to structure as a system of patterned and continuing inequality. In short, 'difference' became the empirical target and occasional infraction became 'delinquency' - with the ultimate result an isolated 'deviant' rather than an integrated 'member' (of a 'community', of 'society').

In contrast, a 'radical' perspective not only told us what inequality (as expressed in housing, employment, education, police discrimination etc.) but why inequality. In other words, with a 'radical' view, one could build up a picture of class 'interest', constantly shifting and changing, but always based ultimately on self-interest and the achievement of the most advantageous accommodation to underlying material circumstance.

The introduction of concepts such as class, material conditions and power can be seen as opening out the area of empirical and theoretical discussion, of moving towards a 'cultural' analysis, as suggesting the priority of the relationship between the individual and structure. However, as 'radical' criminology emerged in practice, it tended to retreat from this more 'open' view of the phenomenon, to

1.R. Quinney: 'From Repression to Liberation...': P.339 in R.A. Scott & J.D. Douglas: Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance: op. cit.

elevate structure above the individual, to paradoxically deny 'appreciation'.

On one level, the 'Marxist' philosophies underlying theorisation in this area tended to shift the focus of interest away from the individual 'deviant' towards the 'greater' issues of control, power, and interest. 'Structures' tended to become the prime target of theory rather than the meaning attributed by the individual to inequality in contemporary capitalist society. In a sense, while seeking to illustrate the full range of inequality and class interest structured into British society, the 'radical' criminologist succeeds in 'backtracking' on the advances of theorists such as Matza and, ultimately, 'degrades' the status and creativity of the individual. Thus, the 'deviant', rather than being seen as in some way managing, adapting to, or even appropriating, the machinery of repression, is seen as a 'cog' in a necessarily 'Marxist' interpretation. In a sense, the meaning he creates out of obvious inequality is ignored as of little relevance in the scholastic pursuit of a full description of the persisting and structured inequalities in society, with the end result a 'theoretical' Marxism that dismisses the real world of 'concrete social problems' as too limiting for its theoretical flights of 'grand theory' which have more 'worthwhile' ends in sight.[1]

> "Singularly absent from Marxist sociology.....has been... with few exceptions,...the detailed study of anything less than the 'societal whole': an 'over-socialization' of theory as one-sided as the situationism I deplored, for bourgeois sociology."

This 'regressive' tendency to fail to 'appreciate' the 'deviant' or his 'deviance', to ignore the meaning of the existent in favour of the pursuit of the ideal - a classless society - has led to the degradation of all that is, in favour of what might be, or even, should be. Our present repression is of little interest except insofar as it suggests our future liberation. Putting this point perhaps a little too strongly, the development of 'radical' criminology on occasion seems too close to a 'political' crusade for empirical comfort.[2]

> "To think critically and radically to-day is to be revolutionary. To do otherwise is to side with oppression. Our

1. Peter Worsley: 'The Reification of Marxism: Rejoinder to Lazar': Sociology Vol.9 No.3 Sept. 1975 P.499.
2. R. Quinney: 'Crime Control in Capitalist Society': P.200 in Taylor, Walton & Young: Critical Criminology: op. cit.

> understanding of the legal order and our actions in relation to it must be to remove that oppression, to be a force in liberation."

From another point of view, the declared goals of 'radical' criminology lead to a replication of the limitations of earlier deviancy theorisation. Whereas intervening theoretical developments, based to a large extent on a critique of 'positivist' criminology, had shown an increasing concern with the interrelationship between the 'deviant' and his material constraints and with the complexity of his interaction with control agencies, the new 'dogma' threatens to shatter this heuristic progression in favour of a neat, tidy, but partial view of the world, to shut down the boundaries of theoretical discussion in a way no less limiting than the 'positivist' concentration on the existent.[1]

> "The most depressing accompaniment of this form of praxis is the foreclosure it threatens on theorising.....Praxis brings the wheel of consensus full circle, back to an unproblematic view of the world."

The point is really that, although the interest in a broader conceptual framework and, in particular, in the patterned and enduring inequalities in contemporary industrial society, is extremely valuable and deviancy theorisation would be totally inadequate without an adequate view of 'class', 'power', and 'interest', the breadth of the concerns of the 'radical' theorists tends towards a 'caricature' of the existent. The real complexity of class relations, of the individual's adaptation to his 'class' and the broader society, is somehow passed over as irrelevant to a greater purpose. Stanley Cohen sums up the vacillation of the 'radical' approach to the 'deviant' perfectly.[2]

> "Already apparent in these stances (critical Marxist criminologies) was the vacillation between the image of the deviant as mismanaged victim and the deviant as cultural hero - images...later correctly identified as associated with 'laissez-faire' liberalism and a more full-blown ideological romanticism."

In short, 'radical' criminology can tell us a great deal about the structure of capitalist society. In particular, it insists quite rightly that an adequate description of deviance must include the

1. D. Downes: 'Praxis makes perfect': PP.8/9 in D. Downes & P. Rock (Eds.): Deviant Interpretations: op. cit.
2. Stanley Cohen: 'Guilt, Justice and Tolerance...': P.19 in D. Downes & P. Rock: Deviant Interpretations: op. cit.

social context of inequality and not accept a one-sided 'pathological' view of infraction. But, this valuable injection of class as a dynamic relation is in turn limited by a failure to attempt any sustained explanation of the means by which the 'repressed' manage to survive in a repressing society. In particular, in contemporary British society, 'stability' and a seeming 'consensus' pose a continuing difficulty for the Marxist who must resort to concepts such as 'false consciousness' or 'lack of consciousness' to explain away the absence of revolution. There is little emphasis on an elaboration of the dialectical relationship (largely symbolic) between the individual and the 'repressing' structures in which he must move and, indeed, survive.

But perhaps this neglect is not surprising when one considers the emphasis placed on theory rather than on empirical observation by the 'radical' criminologist. It is perhaps inevitable that the individual should somehow be forgotten in the more pressing search for 'structure' and 'interest', with earlier theorists dismissed as peddlers of, at worst, 'conservatism' and, at best, 'liberal mystification'.[1]

> "But the whole weight of reconceptualisation tends to be thrown on explanatory levels of theory, as distinct from observational levels. As a result, the most critical issues left unresolved by the problemshifts of the 60's remain unexplored - even short-circuited." (My emphasis)

It must be remembered, of course, again cautioning the dangers of suggesting an illusory evolutionary process, that 'subcultural' theories of deviance were largely rebutted by their failure to sit easily with empirical experience of the 'deviant'. The discovery of the complexity of individual adaptation to material circumstance and the problematic nature of any simple 'consensual' view of society led to a broader view of the 'deviant' and his relationship to wider social structures. Here now, it is suggested, there is a de facto retreat from empirical/observational work to the more 'interesting' and dramatic (but potentially misleading) area of grand theory.[2]

> "In less than a decade, it (the new sociology of deviance) seems to have shifted firmly from being an empirical exercise to become a purely speculative one."

1. David Downes: 'Praise & Performance in British Criminology': British Journal of Sociology Vol.29 No.4 Dec. '78 P.496.
2. Maxwell Atkinson: 'Extended Review: Versions of Deviance': Sociological Review N.S. 22 1974 P.623.

Ultimately, the failings of 'radical' criminology parallel those of 'labelling' in that, as theoretically developed, it tends to become increasingly unreal when viewed from the side of the 'deviant'. Quite simply, if it is to avoid the dual trap of 'commitment' and 'dogma', it must regain its heuristic and exploratory status as an attempt to shed further light on the dynamic role of 'class' in industrial society and on the relations of 'power' which structure underlying material conditions.

In short, although some 'Marxists' may feel that recent theoretical developments have done much to restore Western Marxism to the centre of the stage, this <u>theoretical</u> proliferation and expansion has been achieved at the expense of <u>practical</u> involvement. In a sense, the trend has been away from the empirical to the theoretical, with some grave implications. As Worsley succintly points out, <u>real</u> 'achievement' has been 'quite modest'.[1]

> "Firstly, there are huge areas of society to the study of which the contribution of Marxism in my view has been practically invisible, or, where it has been attempted, has been unconvincing: notably, the analysis of 'superstructural' fields....secondly, the absence.....of a convincing and elaborated Marxist psychology relating individual behaviour to the general model of society; thirdly, the inadequacy of Marxist theory concerning the relationship between the state and society; and, fourthly, the absence of anything like an adequate conceptualization <u>of the levels of mediation, secondary associations, etc., between the 'society' and the local situation.</u>"
> (My emphasis)

The priority then should be a return to 'appreciation', to the empirical explanation of the mechanisms by which diversity and structured inequality are 'managed', <u>both</u> by the society <u>and by</u> the individual, to give at least an 'appearance' of stability. In particular, the <u>symbolic</u> means by which 'repression' and class 'interest' are maintained within a total 'consensus' must be a target for empirical description rather than dismissed as of no concern and subordinate to a greater ideal - the classless society.[2]

> "...the unreflexive attribution of rationality to all forms of deviance could lead to a denial of any consensual reality in the external world."

Deviance is a key issue in 'stability' and must be 'managed'

1. P. Worsley: op. cit. P.499.
2. Stanley Cohen: 'Guilt, Justice & Tolerance...': P.27 in Downes & Rock: <u>Deviant Interpretations</u>: op. cit.

both by society and by the individual 'deviant'. It is not enough to dismiss it as the inevitable product of differential material conditions and class interest. It may well be and it may disappear with the Utopia of a classless society but, really, such an approach tells us very little about 'deviance' or the 'deviant', or anything come to that. In short, how does the individual come to terms with inequality and power? How does he create meaning out of deprivation? The answer, it is suggested, lies in a 'cultural' analysis based on the interrelationship between structure and the individual, rather than a one-sided emphasis on one or the other.

Phenomenalism.

In a sense, this viewpoint is the antithesis of the self-confident assertion of the 'radical' theorist. The emphasis here is on 'manageability', on deliberately limiting the wilder flights of theorisation and empirical work. 'Real' progress can only be made gradually - by limiting objectives so as to maintain an adequate view of the phenomenon which, of course, 'radical' criminology tends to let slip through neglect.[1]

> "What was abandoned was discipline and a modesty of aim. The new criminology is not seated in a commerce with the phenomenal world. It strains towards the absolute and a rampant idealism."

Although the result has sometimes been work of great complexity and 'tortuous' logic, the importance of this approach must not be underestimated. As Rock suggests,[2] the ethnographer faces a crucial and continuing procedural dilemma which ultimately can affect the validity and general applicability of his work. In short, he must come to terms with the programmatic tension between phenomenalism (naturalistic reproduction - 'telling it how it really is') and essentialism (depicting fundamental social processes). The suggestion is that the latter can often lead to a distortion of the former and, ultimately, to the inadequacies noted above in the work of the 'radical' criminologists. One solution to this dilemma is to arrive at a view of structure through people's ethnographically provided ideas of it, though the obvious point to be made is that it is difficult to avoid completely the sociologist's 'natural' tendency towards

1. Paul Rock: 'The Sociology of Crime': P.71 in Downes & Rock: Deviant Interpretations: op. cit.
2. Paul Rock: 'Phenomenalism and Essentialism in the Study of Deviancy': Sociology 1973 Vol. 7 No. 1 PP. 17-29.

categorisation and order 'infecting' his ethnography.

A parallel, but opposite, difficulty is the pursuit of a 'naturalistic' interpretation to absurdity - refusing to set targets or interpret in any way - resulting ultimately in a description perfect in detail, but saying nothing of consequence. While the dangers of structural analysis are ably pointed out by the phenomenalist, this is not of much comfort to the researcher committed to a more complex empirical target, as in this study. For example, 'ganging' described in these terms would not be appropriate to an elaboration of the 'cultural' processes at work through this phenomenon - a wider analysis is required.

It is perhaps the rigidity of the discipline that the phenomenalist imposes on himself that renders this approach less than universally accepted - or attractive. However, the suggestion of the dangers of 'essentialism' is useful as also is the emphasis placed on 'appreciation' and 'empathetic understanding'. In other words, unravelling the meaning attributed by the deviant to his deviance.[1]

> "It is only by appreciating the interior world of the deviant and his significant others that patterns of action and belief can be understood. Without appreciation, the deviant becomes a mechanical and simplified automaton who is ruled by forces over which he has no control."

Phenomenalism then provides a useful balance to the wider, less disciplined view of the 'radical' criminologist. It brings the ultimately individual nature of man's accommodation to his material and social environment back into focus. Moreover, in its detailed approach, it points out the complexity of that relationship and the folly of collapsing complexity too readily into explanatory 'theory'.

On the other hand, phenomenalism tends to underplay the wider 'cultural' processes in favour of a more carefully controlled ethnography and this may be interpreted as a deficiency in the sense that rigid adherence to this tenet would tend to stifle more 'ambitious' exploratory and heuristic work. While it is not intended to suggest that the ethnography and analysis presented in this study of 'ganging' are a major contribution to a 'cultural' perspective, it would be difficult to carry out even its limited purpose without hazarding the dangers of 'essentialism'. The value of phenomenalism then, at

1. Paul Rock: 'Phenomenalism and Essentialism': op. cit. P.23.

least with regard to this study, is partial and concerned with the reassertion of the priority of 'appreciation' and the potential distortions of a structural analysis.

Cultural Studies.[1]

Of the areas of thought briefly and selectively discussed in this chapter, this comes nearest to the conceptual framework outlined in this study. In fact, several of the central concepts introduced by the Birmingham group are taken up and developed in a view of 'culture'. With this in mind, detailed discussion of this approach and, in particular, 'style' as an explanatory tool, will be taken up in the next chapter and in chapter six ('Symbolism').

However, several points must be made before moving on to the elaboration of an alternative view of 'culture'. In particular, Downes suggests in his brief critique of British Criminology[2] that contemporary cultural studies can be regarded, along with the 'new or critical criminologists' and the social historians, as 'Marxist approaches'. This is indeed the case in that there is a common tendency to elaborate a dynamic 'class' interpretation of social 'problems' rather than suggest an analysis which trivialises 'class' as descriptive and static 'status hierarchy'.

However, aside from this, the differing approaches have little in common, with cultural studies adopting an heuristic and exploratory approach to social issues and 'deviance' based on cultural adaptation rather than on a one-sided structural analysis - a concern with concrete social 'problems' rather than with the wider 'structural' flights of theoretical fancy sometimes associated with a 'Marxist' view. Thus, in its work on 'youth cultures',[3] the Centre has given us many insights into the complex relationship between the working class adolescent and his material circumstance. 'Style' is introduced, though not without limitations (to be discussed later), as an attempt to outline the meaningful adaptations worked out by some sections of the working class population to material deprivations or 'contradictions'.[4]

1. For insight into this perspective, see Stencilled Occ. Papers: Centre for Contemporary Cult. Studies: See Bibliography.
2. D. Downes: 'Promise and Performance in British Criminology': British Journal of Sociology Vol.29 No.4 Dec.'78 PP.483-502.
3. S. Hall & T. Jefferson: Resistance through Rituals: Hutchinson 1976.
4. C. Critcher: Football since the War: A Study in Social Change and Popular Culture: CCCS Stenc. Occ. Paper 29 P.15.

> "The fusion of the 'skinhead' phenomenon and 'football hooliganism' may have provided a moment when some of those relationships became clear: how football appeared as an element alongside other cultural experiences: housing redevelopment and the break-up of the traditional neighbourhood, frustrated expectations in education and employment, the commercialisation of leisure, the 'threat' posed by immigration."

Although parallel 'Marxist' approaches have attempted to theoretically outline the operation of inequality and class interest in a dynamic fashion, the Birmingham 'school' deals more 'practically' with 'concrete' issues, introducing the concept of 'meaning', the ways in which sections of the community adapt to particular 'repressions' and 'deprivations'. The focus of their concern is not merely the description of differential circumstance but also the mechanisms by which this material circumstance can be appropriated and, in a sense, 'transcended' by the 'victims' of 'contradiction'.

Moreover, as well as dealing with the adaptation and mediation of particular material circumstance, the Cultural Studies 'school' significantly reintroduces, as a central element, the priority of 'symbol' in contemporary British society, a concept that had tended to disappear under the structural interests of other 'radical' views. In this respect, their theoretical approach to 'capitalist' society can be said to be 'cultural' rather than merely 'structural'. Indeed, the adaptations suggested as emerging in response to 'contradiction' are largely symbolic, challenging the existent without ultimately threatening its destruction. Although there is a tendency in the work of the Centre to 'romanticise' the traditional working class 'community' and to overplay its destruction, without looking at the possibility that a more useful interpretation may lie in future patterns of 'community', the importance of this elevation of the symbolic to the centre of the stage cannot be overestimated. Similarly, the suggestion of a class experience of material circumstance is essential to restore some element of creativity, purpose and 'meaning' to the repressed classes - a necessary correction to the move away from 'appreciation' of other 'radical' theorists.

However, to avoid repetition, it is not intended to offer a systematic critique of cultural studies at this time, since later chapters deal extensively with its approach to 'symbol' and, especially, 'style'. Nevertheless, one area of deficiency might be that, although

'culture' is suggested as a dynamic concept with symbolic adaptations operating to defuse 'contradictions', often in unexpected ways,[1] there is a reluctance to extend this tentative step forward to a more total view of 'culture' as an interrelationship between structure, symbolic adaptation and symbolic 'consensus' or, in the terms of this paper, as 'material' and 'expressive' culture in a dialectical interrelationship with material circumstance. The complexity of symbol in contemporary British society is left unexplored with the notable exception of 'style' as a limited capacity to <u>create</u> meaning out of disadvantage.

Nevertheless, despite its 'Marxist' overtones and a tendency to equate 'culture' with 'class', cultural studies represents a genuine step forward in deviancy theory. It would seem in principle more adequate than a concentration on any single element, e.g. infraction, social reaction, structural inequality, class interest, and so on, which tend to lead to a partial view of the subject. In other words, 'delinquency' is, taken literally, 'action' that must be located in a context - cultural studies suggests this context. Moreover, the description it offers is not static and contemporary but dynamic and historical. The result is a dynamic view of 'culture' related to material circumstance, a 'perspective' that accords rather more readily with an empirical impression of a diverse and changing reality than other more static representations of deviancy. It is this 'perspective' which will be used as the 'springboard' to the interpretation of 'culture' suggested in the next chapter.

<u>Conclusion</u>.

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the priority has been to illustrate the process by which I arrived at the need for a 'cultural' rather than any other type of analysis. However, a parallel purpose has been the suggestion that, although existing theory offers much of substance, with regard to a view of 'culture' it has proved ultimately either deficient or partial. Thus, the intention of the next chapter is to develop the twin elements of 'structural interest' and individual 'appreciation' into a view of 'culture' as comprising 'material' and 'expressive' elements in an interrelationship with

1. See for example: P. Willis: <u>Learning to Labour</u>; op. cit. for an excellent account of the adaptation of working class 'lads' to the inequities of the educational system.

material circumstance.

Put another way, the symbolic nature of 'ganging' and the attempt to develop an adequate conceptual framework for the complex, continuing and dialectical relationship between the 'symbolic' and the 'material' are not approached as an exercise in any particular theoretical perspective. Rather, if the meaning of 'ganging' is to be adequately captured, a real attempt must be made to elaborate an alternative 'cultural' perspective which allows description in a manner not ultimately resulting in either 'phenomenalism' or 'essentialism' but striking a balance between the two.

In short, the priority is to present a theoretical outline that is based firmly on the boys' attempts to 'make sense' of the world they live in, to act creatively and purposefully in the material and social environment of the working class housing areas described earlier. It is this urgent sense of 'appreciation' that required the detailed description of the areas, the 'material' circumstance, and now equally demands an interpretation of 'culture' that takes both 'structure' and the boys' 'creativity' into account.

CHAPTER THREE.

A VIEW OF CULTURE.

The previous chapter has implied the need for a 'cultural' explanation of deviancy in general and 'ganging' in particular. A brief discussion of some of the major theoretical perspectives has suggested an often truncated view of the deviant and his relationship to the society in which he lives. In fact, on occasion, it becomes difficult to visualise him as a creative, purposeful 'member' of society. It is much easier - and tidier - to try and isolate him in some way, either through a description of differentiating factors or, as in the case of 'radical' criminologists, by passing him over in favour of a 'structural' explanation.

However, the 'delinquent', 'deviant', or 'gang member' cannot be treated or described in terms of his 'label' alone; he must be located in a social context that allows a more complete description of his relationship to others and to the structures of society. In this respect, the inadequacy of much theorisation is shown up most vividly. In fact, it has become almost a 'standard' statement in deviancy research (particularly in the study of 'delinquency') for the field worker to comment on the 'ordinariness' of the subjects, on the limited effects of infraction on their 'integration'.[1]

> "The researcher looking for the 'delinquent subculture' has a shock; it is a little disconcerting to find that the vast majority of things that are said to him and the vast majority of events that he witnesses are entirely 'conventional' in terms of the wider community."

It is the intention of this chapter to take as a starting point for the discussion and extension of the concept of 'culture' an empirical view of the 'ordinariness' and 'integration' of the subjects of this study. While it is accepted that the numbers involved are small and the research relationship with individuals was very uneven so that some contacts were literally personal friends, while others were met infrequently and in limited situations, this finding of 'integration' is essential to a 'cultural' explanation. No great value is attached to these findings except insofar as they constitute a starting point for a more adequate theorisation regarding the complexity of the 'mechanisms' through which the individual is 'attached' to society.

1. Owen Gill: Luke Street: The MacMillan Press Ltd. 1977 : P.93.

'Lads' or 'Deviants' - An Empirical Dilemma.

This section does not intend to suggest a 'conventional bind' or 'integration' into some wider structure; 'reality' is far too complex for such over-simplified conclusions. Rather it is intended to outline various indicators of a relationship with 'society' based not on 'deviancy' but on 'conventional' standards of behaviour. The lads are part of that amorphous structure, contemporary British society, affecting it and affected by it, not 'deviants' wrapped up in a cocoon of deprivation.

Thus, although some evidence was found of what appeared to be 'subcultural' values, such as an excessive willingness to use violence, this covered a deeper pattern of the justification of deviance in 'conventional' terms. Pat, superficially, expressed an extreme of distance from 'middle-class' standards, taking great delight in outlining his various 'misdeeds', with no suggestion of guilt, but he was the exception. Moreover, like the other boys, most of his behaviour remained indistinguishable from that of his peers and of others in the circles in which he moved. His long 'record', including police assault and a massive spree of 'joyriding' involving 33 cars over a period of two years, did not separate him from others. In fact, it gave him a certain local notoriety in which he revelled. Of course, I had no occasion to see his reaction immediately after an offense - when, for example, confronted by the representatives of authority (the police and the courts) - he may well have been more contrite in that situation.

A major category of incidents were those regarded as 'stupid' or 'reckless'. There were several occasions during research when I had the opportunity to question lads after a particularly 'rowdy' night out which had ended in arrest and/or injury. Invariably, they would put their 'irrational' behaviour down to 'stupidity' or 'drink'. For example, Paul Martin sustained rather severe cuts through falling against a glass window. He did not see this as 'rowdyism' or 'vandalism' - he was too 'steaming' to know what he was doing. In other words, he was drunk.

> "I got fined £70 fur jumpin' thru a gless windae when I was steamin' .....
> I dinnae set oot tae get intae trouble; I jest gae oot tae ha' a guid time an' it happens - fuckin' mad, man."

Again, Pat Melly, who had a long history of offences, had to

resort to a similar tactic when trying to explain away his almost 'suicidal' act of stealing a car at a time when he was already due to stand trial for a similar offence,

> "I dinnae ken what came o'er me. I was steamin' an' I seen this car an' I took it. I must ha' been awf ma' heid."

Of course, it is likely that this suggestion of 'irrationality' was due to my pressing them for 'explanations' of their behaviour. In this situation, they could do little but dissociate their 'real' selves from the event. However, the interesting point is that by positing 'lack of sense', 'drink' etc., as an excuse, they were in fact demonstrating their awareness of the fact that no explanation they could offer would make their actions comprehensible in terms of <u>'conventional morality.'</u>

A similar 'mechanism' operated with regard to behaviour <u>by others</u> which stretches even a 'loose' interpretation of morality too far. For example, Phil had a part-time job as a barman in an Edinburgh Hotel and used his position to <u>provoke</u> fights. With his brothers, this 'unreasonable' behaviour soon resulted in his being classified as 'mad'. In fact, when I first met him, although with some trepidation because of his reputation, he appeared very ordinary and reasonable, justifying his rather direct approach to 'troublemakers' quite logically.

> "I stert off arguin', but it gets ye naewhere so often I end up batterin' them."

The interesting point is that the term 'madman' is itself an indicator of 'normality'. It allows the subject to declare 'off-limits' behaviour which he himself deems unreasonable and also to clarify his own 'normality'; its very use implies a 'conventional bind', an acceptance of the distinction between a 'madman' (outsider) and 'self' (a 'member' of society) - it sets up moral limits.

Statements of 'irrationality' and assertions of 'madness' then are not in themselves evidence of a 'separation' from 'conventional morality'; they may merely be reactions to presumed criticism which, because the boys are rational and <u>at least aware</u> of wider values, must be forestalled. The assertion of this paper is that, if a contrary interpretation is put forward, based on 'pathology' as the dominant pattern, it becomes very difficult to explain the predominance of 'ordinary' behaviour and the <u>occasional</u> nature of infraction. On the other hand, an 'integrated delinquent' <u>may</u> behave irrationally on occasion, as we all do, without having to suffer the label of 'sociopath'. The

boys self-attribution of 'stupid', 'mad', 'senseless' behaviour indicates their acceptance of some kind of 'morality', or 'core values', rather than their total deviance.

The subjects in Edinburgh and Dundee conformed to a pattern of 'ordinariness' in a variety of ways. Their occasional 'delinquent' escapades and the even more occasional 'gang battle' did not prevent them from moving around the schools, shops, pubs and clubs in a usually unexceptional manner. For most of the time, there was little to indicate their participation in anything other than 'normal' life on a housing estate. On occasion, they were anti-social and violent, attacking a rival without any regard for 'accepted' rules of fair play, but for most of the day, the 'gang member' was impossible to distinguish from his more 'conventional' peers. Talk was usually of football, girls, local 'happenings' on the estate, or the difficulties at school and work. The 'normal' preoccupations of working class adolescents were far more in evidence than their more 'deviant' interests.

The point being made is not that the 'deviant' is 'like other kids' as Matza suggests,[1] but that he is other kids. Thus Mel, although he had been involved in numerous incidents and, in fact, at the time of research had only just come out of prison, was, in his relationships and leisure pursuits, no different to the other boys in Harrytown. He had the usual 'boring' job, spent a great deal of his spare time in the local 'pub', and shared the common interests of women, football - and drink. Between them, they occupied most of his time. Occasionally, he had too much to drink and then became rather aggressive, resulting, twice, in police assault. However, these incidents, while not insignificant, were of marginal importance in terms of the 'totality' of his behaviour which, while not exemplary, was remarkably 'conformist'.

Indeed, like many of the boys, especially when not surrounded by their peers, he was initially most anxious to convey an air of 'respectability'. In fact, it was common to have to spend some time when making contact with new informants breaking down these barriers to 'open' discussion. Johnny, for example, was very wary of admitting any involvement in the 'Y.B.T.', although he was aware that I knew of several incidents in which he had been involved.

"Do you know of the 'Y.B.T.'?.....
Johnny: 'Aye, but I dinnae gae roond wi' them.'"

1. D. Matza: Delinquency and Drift: op. cit. P. 26.

Similarly, his brother, Danny, also denied point-blank any involvement, in spite of it being common knowledge that he had been 'jumped' and severely beaten by a couple of boys from a rival 'team' only the previous week. If nothing else, this 'concealment' of 'deviant' behaviour indicates an awareness that it is 'non-conformist' in relation to the dominant moral and legal norms of society, hence the need to avoid detection.

Indeed, the available data suggests that even those <u>most</u> involved in violence and rule-breaking were capable of the full range of social behaviour. Thus, 'Rogey', one of the key figures in the self-styled 'Tongs', often chose to stay out of trouble in an exemplary way.

> "A strange group of boys were at the door (of the Coffee Bar) talking to 'Rogey'. One of them was flourishing an evil-looking knife....they left a few minutes later and I asked him what they wanted. He replied:
> 'They wanted me tae gae doon the toon wi' them, but I wouldnae gae because I didnae want tae be lifted. I'm better awf up here.'"

On other occasions, he would be in the 'thick' of any fight, without hesitating to think about the consequences. For example, at the time a proposed trip to Aberdeen was cancelled because the Bus Company refused to take any teenagers from Jute Hill, the reaction of the 'gang members' at the Coffee Bar, especially 'Rogey', was initially violent.

> "'Rogey' leapt with both feet at the kitchen door, screaming, 'let me at him' - i.e. the writer."

However, the same group, having been dissuaded from wreaking physical retribution on myself, decided to phone the Press about this 'injustice' and became elaborately over-conformist.

> "'Roby' ('Leader' of the 'Tongs') and his girl friend set the pace by washing the dishes and sweeping the floor.... 'Rogey' (who shortly before had confronted me)...came into the Bar boasting that he had stopped Roddy and Burkie fighting 'Pakis' round the corner. He handed me a penknife, saying that he didn't want to get 'lifted'."

There were many other examples of 'conformist' behaviour and the acceptance - or at least awareness - of 'conventional' values <u>even</u> amongst those most involved in 'gang' behaviour. Thus, 'Roby' stopped 'Rogey' and Roddy from 'stickin' the heid' on a resident who had quite justifiably 'stormed' into the Bar to protest about 'gang' slogans engraved on his car - 'leave the boy alone' was his order. On the other hand, there were many fights and incidents which came out of no-where

with little apparent rational foundation or justification, e.g. throwing bricks through windows for the 'hell of it', damaging cars for a 'giggle'. But to focus on these incidents to the exclusion of the unexceptional and 'integrated' behaviour that seemed to prevail for much of the time, certainly for the vast majority of the occasions of my contact with the subjects, would have been to invert 'reality'. The lads were usually seen in a context furthest removed from social control (on the streets) and yet even here 'deviance' was the exception rather than the rule. Immeasurably more time was spent propping up walls and 'chatting' than was spent terrorising the neighbourhood.

Of course, all this does not mean that the boys were identical in their orientations to 'ganging' or to societal values. It has already been pointed out that individuals must come to an <u>individual</u> accommodation with <u>their</u> material circumstance and in both Edinburgh and Dundee there were particular difficulties of environment and personal background that had to be faced by <u>each</u> of the subjects. For example, though considerable emphasis was placed on 'bravery', 'looking after your mates', 'no grassing', and so on, the position taken up by each boy with regard to these 'norms' was affected to some extent by personal circumstance and inclination.

On another level, many of the 'priorities' of the boys, such as the above, and also, 'being able to take care of yourself', the importance of 'wit', and so on, could be seen <u>not</u> as 'subcultural' but as variations on 'traditional' working class values. Thus, the boys were often seen by their fathers as 'little devils' and their exploits regarded with some permissiveness, as long as the neighbours did not complain or the police did not come to the door. In fact, the fathers I spoke to admitted in confidence that they too were once 'a bit wild'. The lads were to some extent seen as 'sowing their wild oats', a natural stage of life which they would soon have to 'grow out of'; not always a pleasant prospect according to some fathers who saw their youth as a period of 'freedom' gone forever.

However, if all this is true and to a large degree the boys were aware of 'conventional' morality and, moreover, were largely integrated into the neighbourhood, then how did they 'manage' their deviance. Certainly, it is no intention of this chapter to understate the number and degree of their infractions; to many of the local residents, and certainly to the police, the lads were a 'running sore' that could

never quite be 'cured' - mainly because as one set of youngsters grew up, another took their place. The question that must be asked then is - if the subjects are 'integrated' in some way, then how do they 'manage' the potential strain between their 'deviance' and their 'conformity'.

In the course of the research, a great deal of information was gathered on this subject which tends to support the general principle of 'neutralisation', as suggested by Matza.[1] The value of these 'techniques' is that they are rooted in an acceptance (however vague) of a general, overriding 'morality'. Even a reduction of their theoretical value to the level of 'excuse' does not deny the indication of an 'awareness' of a 'controlling' value system.[2]

> "Ordinary delinquents evaluate (delinquency) in terms of ordinary conventions. He excuses himself." (My emphasis)

While empirical proof of this hypothesis has been slow in coming,[3] impressive evidence of the operation of these 'techniques' was found in Edinburgh and Dundee. In fact, most subjects questionned after incidents tended to use one or other of the basic 'techniques' suggested by Matza - denial of responsibility, denial of the victim, extenuating circumstances, condemnation of the condemners and higher loyalties. Of course, in the field, the differences were less clear-cut and there was greater diversity, but the principle of 'excuses', rather than 'alienation', did seem to apply.

For example, the 'mitigating' effects of alcohol were often put forward - 'I was steaming' or 'I was paralytic'. This view was usually supported by comments such as, 'I wouldnae dae it if I was sober - ye ken that.'

> "Pat, already up for trial for 'taking and driving away', left a hotel 'steaming' and took a scooter. But, the scooter did not even work and the 'polis' caught him pushing it home.
> This seemed remarkably stupid and Pat conceded this: 'I didnae ken where I was, I was paralytic.'"

> The same boy put drink forward as the reason for a lot of

1. D. Matza & G.M. Sykes: 'Techniques of Neutralisation': American Sociological Review Vol.22 No.6 Dec. 1957 PP. 664-70.
2. D. Matza: Delinquency & Drift: op. cit. P. 42.
3. For example: L.J. Siegel, S.A. Ralthus, C.A. Ruppert: 'Values & Delinquent Youth': British Journal of Criminology: Vol.13 1973 P. 243.

'trouble', thus giving general credibility to a particular excuse.

> "There's some boys wha' cannae take their drink - after a few bevies, they'll battle wi' anyone."

'Condemning the condemners' was a rather more 'subtle' excuse, requiring greater imagination. The boy would usually get very angry and attempt to erase his guilt by pointing out the unreasonable attitude of the complainant, concentrating on an implied 'injustice'.

> "Mike and his friend were walking down the street trying car doors. An 'hysterical old cow' reported this to the Police and they were 'lifted'. They claimed she completely 'distorted' the incident, although they admitted trying the door handles."

In rather different circumstances, 'Muff' was accused, as a result of information received, of stealing records from the Coffee Bar. He completely ignored the basic issue and swore vengeance on the 'grass'.

> "Tell me wha' it is an' I'll get the fuckin' truth oot o' him. It must ha' been one o' those fuckin' Tongs."

Other examples, though conforming to the general pattern, were rather confusing and difficult to categorise. In one instance, Jimmy admitted he was in the wrong initially, but then justified his later aggression in terms of <u>his victim's reaction</u>.

> "(Jimmy) 'I was in the pub an' I sterted chattin' up this bird....I didnae ken she was wi' a laddie an' he wasnae too pleased. Anyway, it all sorted oot when I ken't she was wi' a laddie.
> When I'd finished drinking, I walked oot the bar an' saw her again wi' her man an' his mates. I gi' her a whistle an' he sterted callin' me all the bastards under the sun.. I wasnae gonna tak' him on mah ain so I got some o' the boys an' walked past him - he didnae say a word.'
> (Writer) 'You admit you were in the wrong chatting her up, so why did you do that?'
> (Jimmy) 'But he had nae right callin' me..I couldnae stand fer that.'"

Another interesting tactic, an adaptation of 'fatalism', involved absolving oneself from 'blame' by <u>predicting</u> 'trouble' - of course, this meant that, when it came along, one had no option but to get involved. That was the theory, but in practice, one was able to provoke confrontations because they were <u>inevitable</u> anyway. For example, Stuart preparing us for trouble on the Aberdeen trip.

> "<u>We</u> wouldnae stert any trouble but the Aberdeen boys will. We dinnae look fer battles, but if we're jumped, we have tae defend oorsels."

Of course, since most of the boys' infractions centred around

fighting and rowdyism, their 'excuses' for violence were the most numerous, following the general line of 'self-defence'. It was interesting that no subject condoned 'senseless' violence, that is, attacks without reason - this was the province of the 'madman'. Of course, this does not mean that many of the incidents observed did not appear 'senseless' to 'outsiders' - they did.

'Muff' gained considerable fame in the local Press for assaulting a police officer in a 'riot' in Dundee city centre. However, he was quite adamant that he was the victim, since his injuries were the more serious.

> "...he claims that he was more injured than the victim (the policeman); he had to have eight stitches put in the back of his head - the 'polis' hit him with a truncheon - 'there was nae need fer that.'"

Jim Smith, on the other hand, who had injured a policeman in the same incident by hitting him over the head with two bottles, was quite clear that his action was 'justified'.

> "What would ye dae if some boy jumped on yer back - you'd bottle them! How was I tae ken he was polis?"

This need for 'self-defence' is made greater by the fact that, if you do not look after your own interests, no-one else will. Tony pointed this out when explaining why he and some friends had got into a fight at a Ballroom, instead of getting help from the Police.

> "I asked the polis ootside fer help after I'd been battered but they tell't me tae get lost. The bouncers wouldnae help either, so I got some o' the boys an' we leathered the bastards."

Paul Harrison, in his study of soccer violence, discovered the importance of this principle of 'self-defence' - in theory, if not in practice.[1]

> "Though you must always retaliate to insult or attack, in theory you never start it yourself: 'We'll be nice and quiet; but if they come over here, we'll fuckin' murder them.'"

Phil, mentioned previously as a 'madman', operates on the assumption that self-defence works best if you get in first. Thus, although he may strike the first blow, he is really defending himself against an 'anticipated' attack. In essence, this is nothing more than an extension of the more 'conventional' image of 'self-defence'.

"I can spot those people wha' are goin' tae start

1. Paul Harrison: 'Soccer's Tribal Wars': New Society 5/9/74 Vol.29 P.603.

somethin' an' I get them first."

Again, although he admits that he did get into 'battles' when he was with the 'Y.B.T.', there was always a reason. This 'logic' did not apply to other 'gangs'.

> "...the Jungle was a real gang - they gae oot on buses together tae stert battles."

One's action is always seen as 'reasonable', whereas the actions of others are easily classified as irrational, simply because social distance makes them appear so.

In Dundee, it was interesting that both the 'Huns' and the 'Tongs' in the final clashes before the closure of the Coffee Bar, used 'self-defence' as the 'excuse' for their behaviour. They 'read' the incidents in such a way as to present themselves as on the defensive - they selected an order of events that fitted this pattern.

> "'Rogey' ('Tongs'):'...they were after Burkie, I had nae choice but tae help him.'
> 'Muff' ('Huns'):'Rogey challenged us; he said he'd bring his squad up tonight, so we've got tae be ready.'"

Thus, although on occasions behaviour did seem 'senseless', the actors were always ready to justify it, even if only to opt out by claiming that they were 'drunk'. It may be that the presence of the researcher forced this upon them but, even if this were so, the implication remains that they were at least aware of a pattern of 'dominant', overriding values. Moreover, it was interesting that, especially in Dundee, much time was spent arguing with each other over the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of their respective positions. In short, there was very little evidence of a distinctive 'subcultural' approach to 'morality', rather an attempt to subvert its influence.

Of course, it is not enough to suggest that the lads contacted were aware in some way yet to be explained of 'conventional' norms and values and that for much of the time their behaviour was not 'deviant' but 'ordinary' and 'integrated', if only in terms of the local 'community'. Certainly, they did not stand out and were not treated as 'different', 'hooligans', or 'deviants', by the local population, though, of course, there were many comments from older people about the decline of 'young people to-day'. It is also necessary to point out that, just as the lads were part of the local 'community' and also the wider society (at least in terms of an awareness of a 'dominant morality'), they were also integrated into the general pattern of peer relationships and teenage 'culture' both in the area and in the

city as a whole. As well as being involved with 'ganging' and infraction, the boys were adolescent and subject to the pressures (personal and commercial) of teenage 'culture' (interpreted loosely as the pursuit of excitement and 'kicks'), itself based on 'entertainment' rather than 'cultural separation'.

Whereas some researchers[1] have seen the withdrawal of adolescents from the adult world into peer relationships as a factor in 'delinquency', that is not the main concern of this paper. The priority is rather with demonstrating that the subjects were concerned with being 'adolescent' in the contemporary sense of fashion, music and entertainment, rather than with being isolated in a world of deviance and 'gang' violence. As Downes suggests,[2] the teenage population has certain 'leisure goals' - loosely described as 'teenage culture' - which form priorities for their leisure-time.

> "(Leisure goals are)....meant to subsume both 'subterranean values' - the search for excitement, the pursuit of aggression - and certain leisure aspirations and expectations reflected in and perpetuated by teenage culture - sophistication (clothes, wit), smartness, 'exploit', 'kicks'. Achievement in some or all of these areas might be said to constitute 'success' in leisure for adolescents."
> (My emphasis)

This statement is useful in that it states clearly the priorities of the adolescent in terms of leisure aspirations. The teenage population generally is affected by a desire to be 'in' rather than 'out', to be 'innovative' rather than 'conformist' and the subjects of this study were no exception. 'Fun' was centred around expenditure and new experience. An adequate supply of money was critical, as Paul Martin suggested when talking about the disadvantages of being unemployed - he became a social isolate.

> "I sit at hame an' watch telly....there's nothin' else tae dae. Ye cannae gae oot wi' yer mates because ye've nae cash. Lassies will nae gae oot wi' ye if ye've nae money."

Tony Denton, who took home about £30 each week, spent it all on drink and entertainment.

> "I'd be bored stupid without money. I still havenae got enough fer real fun."

The teenagers at the Coffee Bar would sit around looking bored and 'vacant' until a new record was brought out or something 'exciting' happened. They always appeared to be waiting for 'interest', for

1. For example, see: H.J. Parker: op. cit. P. 60.
2. D. Downes: The Delinquent Solution: op. cit. P. 248.

'action'. For example, the arrival of a current 'skinhead' group's latest record was greeted with great excitement and attempts to grab it out of my hands. However, after about an hour or so, apathy returned - anticipation did not quite match up to the 'reality'.

Any attempt to separate out the 'deviants' from their law-abiding peers is impractical and leads to distortions precisely because there is this common submergence in 'teenage culture' as an imperative to the pursuit of 'fun' and 'kicks'. True, the rule-breaker may be under special constraints which he must mediate, but he is also an adolescent with all the attendant problems of that status. Perhaps he pursues 'fun' a little harder, takes it to extremes, but that is a problem of degree, not difference in kind.

In short, most juvenile delinquents, leaving aside the 'pathological' fringe, are adolescents who sometimes offend. Even James Patrick's 'sociopaths' in Glasgow were subject to the usual insecurities of relations with the opposite sex.[1]

> "Tim was at pains to convince me that 'gemmies' had no need of 'birds on the game', because all the best looking girls flocked around gang leaders."

These adolescent tensions were very obvious in Dundee, where any type of social occasion was accompanied by heavy drinking to overcome shyness. Dancing was especially feared by the boys because of the great likelihood of looking 'ungainly' on the dance floor.

> "Jacko was quite adamant - 'I cannae dance without a bevy'. Apparently, the boys get the oldest to buy a 'carry-out' and they drink it on the street corner before going into the dance-hall."

There was a general fear of social failure, of not 'keepin' yer end up', of 'looking daft', which made drink a necessity for 'real' fun, the drowning of insecurities. For example, Sandy illustrated the importance of drink in the ideal sequence of events for a 'great' Saturday night out.

> "A guid night means money in yer pocket, gettin' pissed an' then gettin' yer end away."

In short, it is often forgotten that 'gang boys' or 'delinquents', exist in the context of adolescence - whether they like it or not, they will grow up. The boys are certainly aware of this and see their behaviour as transitory, as appropriate to a certain age group. Thus, although it may be 'fun', everyone (including the apparently 'committed')

1. James Patrick: A Glasgow Gang Observed: op. cit. P.109.

must 'grow up'. This point has been repeatedly made in field studies, not least by Wilmott. Stan Cohen significantly singles out this finding for comment.[1]

> "The most striking finding was that the boys were very much members of their community. The withdrawal in early adolescence into the male peer group is not total and is a phase succeeded naturally by courtship, marriage, and the rejoining of mixed-age society as adults...." (My emphasis)

Even Patrick concedes that the 'Young Team' has to grow up, although he ignores the contradiction between the teenage 'sociopath' and the adult husband and father - presumably 'sociopathology, like 'delinquency', is also something that one 'grows out of'.[2]

> "On being asked why so few boys over twenty remained in the Fleet, Tim replied: 'They used tae be in it, but they've screwed the nut.'" (My emphasis)

In Edinburgh, Pat, who had 'settled down', was quite derisory about his past behaviour when he 'ran aroond wi' the Y.B.T.'

> "Ah was a wee laddie - stupid. We all used tae dae it, but no the now."

This feeling that 'running around wi' gangs' is acceptable behaviour only as part of 'growing up' is emphasised by the contempt that is shown for those few older boys who continue to 'play wi' the wee laddies'. For example, Phil freely admitted his past participation in group violence, but he now had 'better' things to do. However, Johnny Bennett, once a friend, was still actively involved in the 'Y.B.T.', behaviour which led Phil to avoid his company.

> "Johnny used tae hang aboot wi' Adrian an' me, but now I couldnae gae up tae him an' ask him tae gae fer a bevy. He's jest stood still, hanging aboot wi' the Y.B.T. at his age - man, it's degrading."

H.J. Parker found a similar progression in Roundhouse. Most boys eventually give up 'delinquency'. Those who do not are not regarded with 'respect'.[3]

> "The other boys perhaps have the key when they role-type such individuals as 'mad', 'never learns', 'just wants sympathy'."

On the other hand, in the current research, there was little evidence of those boys most involved in 'ganging' inverting this outside view and claiming justification for their behaviour on the

1. S. Cohen: 'Critical Notice of P. Wilmott: Adolescent Boys of East London': P.224 in British Journal of Criminology Vol.7 1967.
2. James Patrick: op. cit. P. 88.
3. H.J. Parker: op. cit. P. 192.

grounds of their youth. Immature status did not appear to be claimed as a more general excuse. After all, such a claim would have clashed with their interpretation of themselves as 'real men', independent and self-determining.

Thus, for most of the boys, 'delinquency' and 'ganging' did not involve a separation from the usual pattern of adolescent concern with leisure and new experience. Though their particular priority may have been an adaptation such as 'ganging', involving occasional 'delinquency', they remained 'integrated' into the general pattern of peer group relationships in the areas and also susceptible to the 'pressures' and 'demands' of a wider 'teenage culture'. As illustrated above, the most vivid examples of the adolescent nature of the enterprise are provided by those boys who refuse to 'grow up', who continue to 'run aboot wi' the wee laddies'. Their penalty is to fall out of step with the general patterns of development - they are themselves labelled as 'wee laddies' and are 'cut off' from their peers. Ultimately, everyone knows that the 'game' is for adolescents only - for those who fail to see its transitory and temporary nature, it changes, becomes more 'serious'. Indeed, it may then become 'commitment'.

Of course, this should not be taken as a dismissal of teenage adaptations as 'meaningless'; on the contrary, they reveal much about the state of society. But, their heuristic value diminishes if their essentially adolescent and temporary nature is forgotten; if their place in a greater pattern of 'integration' is omitted or passed over.

In this context, another aspect of leisure-time behaviour among working class adolescents often remarked-on is the centrality of the 'laff'.[1] Thus, trivial rule-breaking is often 'fun'; it can relieve boredom and make you feel 'great'. Seen in this way, it becomes 'real' and 'meaningful'. Peter Marsh saw this quite clearly and suggests that this explanation is appropriate to many 'disruptive' acts that seem 'aimless'.[2]

> "...their object is not to create damage or disruption in itself (but for) 'fun'." (e.g. taking things and putting them back.)

This type of behaviour was very common among the subjects of this study. For example, in the Coffee Bar, I used to get baited constantly and had to develop the technique of ignoring the culprit, thus

1. See for example: P. Willis: Learning to Labour: op. cit.
2. P. Marsh: 'Careers for Boys: Nutters, Hooligans and Hardcases': New Society 13/5/76 Vol.36 PP. 346-348.

destroying the 'game'. 'Oggie', having been successfully ignored, presented me with an ash-tray, saying:

> "You're a no bad lad, so I'll gi' ye yer ash-tray back."

Other examples of similarly 'aimless' behaviour might include:

> "I had to go outside the Bar to take a chair off one boy who was throwing it about in the street.....
> Another boy was walking around the Bar, carrying a chair leg and wearing my crash helmet.....
> I had to restrain one customer who wanted to impale Mr. Morgan against the wall with the only serviceable dart."

On a more serious level, but for much the same reasons, Charlie had his own system of 'shopping'.

> "We used tae gae oot shoppin'. We gradually changed oor clathes in each shop until we ended up wi' a whole new outfit - magic!"

However, leisure based essentially on the pursuit of pleasure and new experience is <u>potentially</u> boring; the escape from routine becomes increasingly difficult. Billy, in a fit of depression, revealed just how bad things were - even sex had lost its attraction.

> "Let's face it; once ye've been thru' one, ye've been thru' them all."

The build-up to an outing or just to 'Saturday Night' was always more exciting than the event itself, which rarely lived up to expectations. For example, a projected trip to Aberdeen became the focal point for all conversation.

> "Several of the boys, Muff, Rogey and co., told me what they were going to do in Aberdeen, most of it too horrific for words.....They were going to get 'steaming', 'smash up' a few places, get some girls....."

But, when the trip was cancelled, they simply lost interest, switching to other topics, such as their last escapade. Greatest excitement was generated when an incident occasionally reached the Press or, very rarely, television. Gerry's greatest triumph was as follows:

> "We were on Police Call (a police information programme) once. They appealed for information aboot the stealin' o' cars in this area. Me an' Billy even pinched cars fra' ootside the Flats in broad daylight."

When it was pointed out to him that he had been 'sent away' for these offences, he said, knowingly:

> "Ye should ha' seen the things they didnae catch me fer."

Often, a boy would do something which inevitably meant that he would be caught and he would justify it by saying, 'I did it fer a laugh'. Terry provides a good example.

> "I was at a party wi' a mate an' we left steamin'. We took a Rover 2000 that was ootside an' went fer a ride. But, when we brought it back, the polis were waitin' - we got lifted. We only did it fer a laugh, somethin' tae dae."

Jimmy embarked on a similar adventure, with equally predictable results. (He crashed and was eventually arrested.)

> "I was oot fer a bevy an' met this boy. We left the Bar an' got intae a car an' drove off. (Why?)...He was gain' tae gi' me drivin' lessons but he couldnae drive either - that was magic."

There were many other examples of attempts to transform the monotony of the street corner into a less oppressive, more 'light-hearted' experience. In fact, it is common for field workers to remark on the ability of working class adolescents to re-work a potentially boring work and leisure context in a creative and 'amusing' manner.[1] For example, Downes suggests the priority of the 'job context' as a factor in leisure time 'excitement', though he does not suggest the parallel centrality of 'wit' and 'repartee' <u>in</u> the work situation, as a deflection of monotony.[2] Creativity is to be found in <u>both</u> work and leisure.

> "Feasibly, the more debasing his job context and the more dissociated he feels from work, the more the lower working class 'corner boy' tries to recoup in leisure something of the freedom, achievement, autonomy and excitement he is denied in work."

Perhaps significantly, as is revealed in Chapter One, a large number of the subjects had been unemployed at some time during the study. Moreover, even when they were in work, they attached very little importance to the work situation except as a means of financing their leisure time exploits. Certainly, the type of job they held down was usually manual and/or mechanistic, for example, on a production line in a factory or as a shop assistant or unskilled labourer. The boys who did appear to have some preference for a particular type of work did so in terms of being 'ootside', in the open air, rather than in terms of job content. For example, Billy's view of 'navvying' on a building site.

> "Och, it gets a wee bit cauld in the winter but I like it. (Why?)....Ye get a guid laugh wi' the boys; it's better'n -

1. For example see: J.B. Mays: <u>Growing Up in the City</u>: University of Liverpool Press 1954/ Paul Lerman: 'Individual Values, Peer Values & Subcultural Delinquency': <u>American Sociological Review</u> Vol.33 1968 P.235.
2. D. Downes: <u>The Delinquent Solution:</u> op. cit. P.243.

sittin' in a factory or a shop. Naebody pushes ye aroond."

The prime movers of 'violence', with the exception of 'Muff', who was himself more the exception than the rule, conformed to a pattern of extreme job mobility, sometimes to the extent of blurring the boundary between employment and unemployment - they sometimes seemed to never leave the stage of either 'jest starting' or 'jest jackin' in' a job. The idea of holding down a job for a reasonable period never emerged in practice.

Thus, tentatively, it would seem that the subjects did provide some evidence that the absence of satisfaction and interest in work makes the leisure context more important as a means of developing and protecting one's 'identity'. It is perhaps no accident that the subjects, who were generally immersed in the symbolic structure of the 'gang', itself an attempt to invest leisure with meaning, had little interest in work as either an immediate satisfaction or as a step towards a 'career'.

A Street Corner 'Happening'.

It has been suggested that on several levels the lads seemed to be involved not in a 'subcultural', distinct relationship to the local community and society as a whole, but rather in some kind of 'accommodative', 'integrative' intermeshing with wider structures. Certainly, in no way could they be taken as 'isolated' and 'deviant', concerned only with elaborating a 'gang-based' re-working of existing relationships. However, one further point must be made with regard to the working class adolescent in general and the subjects of this study in particular, namely, the location of much of their leisure time - on the 'streets'. If there were to be any 'action', it is here that it would have to take place rather than in the distant - and expensive - areas of commercial entertainment based largely in the city centres.

The ironic contrast between the leisure aspirations of working class adolescents (heavily influenced by the advertising media) and the monotonous reality of the 'street corner' has of course been pointed out by several researchers.[1] Indeed, H.J. Parker suggests[2] -

> ".....a positive correlation in Roundhouse between those youngsters who are always playing out and later hanging around and their level of delinquency."

1. See for example: P. Wilmott: Adolescent Boys of East London: London 1966 P. 54./ Owen Gill: Luke Street: op. cit.
2. H.J. Parker: A View from the Boys: op. cit. P. 37.

However, perhaps this is overplaying the significance of 'hanging about' and underplaying its common occurrence in areas with large concentrations of working class families. Certainly, it has already been pointed out in Chapter One that it was almost 'traditional' for the streets to be appropriated, first by younger children for play and then by their older brothers (and sisters) for 'hanging about', 'having a laugh wi' the boys'.

In fact, the boys contacted in Edinburgh and Dundee spent very little time at home. Indeed, many seemed to have a definite antipathy towards the very idea of 'staying in'. This did not necessarily imply a dislike of their parents, or of their home situation, but rather a recognition of the element of control that parents wield. One can never have 'real fun' at home simply because it <u>is</u> home. Comments such as 'if my parents found oot, I'd be deid', were quite common after a 'delinquent' incident. Even parents who would be defined by middle class matrons as 'weak' were possessed with at least an image of 'control'.

Thus, excitement and 'kicks' must be sought outside the home, on the 'streets', or in some other direction, for example, commercial entertainment. However, this is also limited (as indicated in Chapter One) with the tendency to centralise entertainment in city centre discos and dance halls, further emphasising the importance of the 'street corner' - any 'happening' will almost certainly have to be a 'street corner happening'. Of course, in Dundee, even these central facilities were out-of-date and inadequate, increasing the reliance on the 'streets' for excitement.

It has already been suggested that the working class adolescent lays great emphasis on the achievement of 'satisfaction' in leisure, on 'having a good time'. This places him in a position of some strain when the opportunities open to him are limited. An allied fact, often overlooked, is that his expectations are high; he tends to denigrate existing facilities <u>even</u> when they appear to be adequate.

Thus, after an initially favourable reception from the teenagers in Jute Hill, the Coffee Bar waned in 'mass' popularity as its limitations were exposed. Criticism became frequent and wide-ranging.

> "There's nothin' tae dae except play records...The girls look like laddies; they all wear troosers...It was nae bad when it sterted, but now it's boring."

Talk began to shift back to 'murderin' the Fleet', 'gettin' staned', or 'gettin' yer end away'. Significantly, damage began to increase, records and canteen stock were stolen; the teenagers moved from inside the Bar to outside; they used it as a base for seeking new excitement. This boredom with a local facility reflected a general feeling that 'Dundee was deid'. Paul Martin pointed out that the shortage of entertainment went hand-in-hand with a purge on under-age drinking, so that even the 'pubs' were denied them.

> "It's terrible in Dundee; there's only the Chalet in Broughty Ferry for dancin'.....Pubs are O.K. but there's a lot wi' Over-21's Only signs - that's because o' under-age drinkin' an' fightin'."

The Warden of a large Community Centre conceded this point, further suggesting that the situation was particularly bad for the 14-16yr. olds, who had particular difficulty in getting served in 'pubs'. This general point is made in my field diary.

> "So...teenagers exist in a gulf in Dundee, a gulf aggravated by high unemployment....also Community Centres have a social educational function which, to a large degree, precludes them from alleviating the situation by putting on more 'pure' entertainment."

However, this image of poor facilities, of 'kids on the streets', can be taken too far and obscure the complexities of adolescent expectations. Thus, Edinburgh too was almost universally classified as 'deid' by the informants, although there were a number of dance halls and modern 'discos'. Indeed, two boys had just returned from London and their opinion was that even that city was decidedly 'deid'.

It is true that the 14-16yr. olds, who seemed most involved in 'group deviance', did exist in a particular social vacuum as far as commercial facilities were concerned - most 'discos' aimed at the over-18's. Indeed, in Dundee, there was only one dance hall genuinely open to the under-21's. On the other hand, those older boys who did go to 'discos' were unimpressed and declared them to be 'rubbish'.

The situation was not clear-cut but it seemed that entertainment was expensive and sparse for those in mid-adolescence. At the same time, expectations were high and most places, such as the Coffee Bar, failed to 'measure-up'. This left only the 'streets' and most certainly meant that the pressures to 'have fun' were denied easy fulfilment and boredom was the constant enemy. The general mood was one of restlessness, of waiting for something to 'happen', and it is in this context that rule-breaking and the symbolic re-working of the existent

must be seen. Thus trivial incidents - a look, a push - were often interpreted as insults and action taken, sometimes out of all proportion to the original 'offence'.

Indeed, many fights referred to as 'senseless' could be seen as immediate, unplanned reaction to events. When Tommy said, 'There isnae time tae stop an' think', he might be right - in the context of disposing of time 'on the streets', it is possible to react to particular situations almost spontaneously. This need not imply 'irrationality' or 'pathology' but merely a release, albeit temporary, from the ever-present 'contradiction' between the leisure goals generally held by adolescents - 'teenage culture' - and, in particular, by working class adolescents, and the 'reality' of the street corner.

However, having sketched an empirical finding of 'integration' and 'accommodation', initially into the local 'community', but also into a wider social context, loosely referred to as contemporary British society, it is now necessary to relate this finding to a view of the concept of 'culture'. After outlining some deficiencies in current theorisation in this area, it is hoped that a wider view of 'culture' and, in particular, of symbolic structures, can be developed that will allow a description of 'ganging' that can take into account the 'normality' of the subjects as well as the 'reality' of their 'deprivations' and their 'deviance'.

'Culture', 'Class' and Contemporary Society.

While it has been suggested that the lower class adolescent, although mediating particular social and leisure constraints, is 'integrated' into contemporary British society in some way, the details of this process have not been elaborated. The reason for this is a belief that the concept of 'culture' is too complex to be adequately discussed in tandem with empirical description.[1] However, a theoretical 'overview' of the concept is now necessary.

1. Note. For an illustration (now, of course, somewhat outdated) of the extent of the term's use see: A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn: Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions: Cambridge, Mass. 1952.
Surveying the term's definitions under headings (descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, genetic), they found 164 definitions - not counting the various statements about culture that must run into thousands.

Before beginning this discussion, certain points with regard to its general format need to be clearly stated. In particular, it should be stressed that the Marxist vs. Functionalist debate is used as an heuristic device, as an attempt to lay the basis for the view of 'culture' to be presented in the next section, itself dependent on developing the central and crucial issue of a co-existent unity and diversity in contemporary British society. It is not suggested that all 'Marxists' present identical views; equally, all 'Functionalists' can not be subsumed under a single heading. Again, it is accepted that there are many, such as Parkin,[1] who produce arguments which, although they focus a great deal of attention on structure, as do 'Marxists', owe more to Weber than to Marx in terms of basic ideas - they have tried to establish, for example, when and how 'societal' values are involved, stressing situational, negotiated sets of values, beliefs and practices.

In a sense, then, the debate might be presented in terms of three rather than two camps (including the 'neo-Weberians', e.g. Parkin, as well as the Marxists and Functionalists). However, the following discussion is not definitive, but illustrative. The concern is merely to suggest the cultural priority to be developed in the conceptual framework of a 'material/expressive' dialectic. Again, at the risk of presenting caricatures of 'Marxism' and 'Functionalism', it should be stressed that I am not aiming my discussion at particular 'Marxists' or 'Functionalists', nor am I interested in the 'advanced' Functionalists or Marxists as opposed to their more 'determinist' and less theoretically 'subtle' fellows. The discussion is general and intended to be so since the purpose is not the theoretical validation of either Marxism or Functionalism (or 'neo-Weberianism', come to that) but the illustration of the theoretical priority of this chapter - a concern best developed through the opposition of Marxism and Functionalism.

Having outlined these provisos, the task is perhaps best summed up by Abner Cohen (although his interest is less than impartial) in his

1. For Example.
   Frank Parkin: Class Inequality and Political Order: London, Paladin 1972.
   Frank Parkin (Ed.): The Social Analysis of Class Structure: Tavistock 1974.

description of 'culture' as a 'relative term', with basically 'separate' groups pulled together by a 'political' structure - the problematic of a co-existent unity and diversity.[1]

> "In a simple society with simple technology and little division of labour there can be said to be one homogeneous culture. But once a society develops beyond this elementary stage, different groups, each with its own culture or sub-culture will emerge. Whether suchaa society will now be described as homogeneous or heterogeneous in its culture will depend on the social unit, the political grouping that one takes as one's universe of reference.....
> A culture is thus a relative term, its identity being defined by a corporate interest group." (My emphasis)

Such a view of 'culture' clashes with the more 'traditional' definitions which omit any mention of 'class', of relationships of domination and subordination, of 'exploitation'. Their concern is with society as a 'functional' unity and 'culture' as an expression of this 'fact',[2] as the means of perpetuating society as a 'consensus'. To point up this contrast, perhaps unfairly, Tylor's definition,[3] single-minded in its conviction, can be contrasted with Cohen's 'vagueness'.

> "(Culture is)....that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."(My emphasis)

However, while it might be suggested that such a definition is itself 'primitive', functionalism is 'committed' to the concept of interrelating structures, to an 'integrationist' view of society as a 'functional' whole - any conflict element is noticeably absent, as in the following, more 'sophisticated', outline of 'culture' by Schneider.

> "....culture is defined as a system of symbols and meanings. That is, any given culture is seen to consist in a system of units and their interrelations, and these contain the fundamental definitions of the nature of the world, of what life is like, of man's place in it."(My emphasis)[4].

It is this initial 'commitment'[5] which threatens a potential polarization of definition. Thus, Hall and Jefferson agree the[6]

1. Abner Cohen: Two Dimensional Man: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1974 PP.85/6
2. For other 'Functionalist' definitions of 'culture' see: R.A. Georges (Ed.) Studies on Mythology: Irwin Dorsey Ltd. 1968 esp. Malinowski's defn. P.8.
3. Edward B. Tylor: P.1 in Primitive Culture: N.Y. Brentano's 1924.
4. D. Schneider: P. 116 in R.F. Spencer (Ed.) Forms of Symbolic Action: 1970 Seattle: University of Washington Press.
5. See also: N. Abercrombie & B.S. Turner:'The Dominant Ideology Thesis': Brit. Journal of Sociology Vol.29 No.2 June 1978 PP.149-170.
6. S. Hall & T. Jefferson (Eds.): Resistance through Rituals: 1976 Hutchinson PP.10-11.

importance of 'culture' as 'a system of symbols and meanings' and initially their position would seem not dissimilar to that of the 'advanced functionalist'.

> "(Culture)...refer(s) to that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life experience. Culture is the way, the forms, in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence."

However, a more 'open' view of 'culture', as suggested by Abner Cohen, is itself capable of 'commitment' in terms of a theoretical overview.[1] Thus, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies,[2] a leading exponent of the 'radical' view, would develop its definition of 'culture' as meaning in the direction of a 'conflict' model of society, or Marxism with a small 'm'. This development centres around the problem of the relationship of 'culture' to 'structure'.[3]

> "Whereas structures are largely beyond the control of the individual, and have their source in the distribution of power and wealth in a society, cultures represent systematic attempts to come to terms with these structures..... they are attempts to impose meanings." (My emphasis)

In other words, instead of acting as a simple mechanism for the transmission of the norms, values and customs necessary for the maintenance of society, 'culture' is seen as a dynamic relation between the individual and determining forces - he uses 'culture' to 'adjust to' or 'negotiate with' underlying structural conditions. Such a view is indeed useful as a suggestion of the potential for social change 'built into' society.

However, this dynamic view of 'culture' can be taken further; the potential exists for it to be converted into an 'ideological' definition, to effectively close down its widening horizons by an embrace of polarization. In other words, 'culture' can be subordinated to a class imperative - it can be made the creature of a 'radical' view of 'culture'.[4]

1. Note. Definitions of 'culture' and 'class' are not of course confined to 'Marxist' or 'Structural-Functionalist' viewpoints. There is also, for example, Max Weber's view of social class. See: A. Giddens: The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies; PP.40-48 Hutchinson Univ. Lib. 1973. However, at the risk of over-simplification, in the interests of establishing the primacy of symbolic structures, the Marxist/Functionalist debate will be used to demonstrate 'gaps' in theorisation.
2. To be referred to as C.C.C.S./Stencilled Occasional Papers to be termed 'Paper', with number and title.
3. T. Jefferson & J. Clarke: 'Down these Mean Streets....': Paper 17 C.C.C.S.
4. Bryn Jones: 'The Politics of Popular Culture': Paper 12 C.C.C.S. P.3/5.

> "In history, the social organisation of material life has meant organisation into relations of domination and subordination. In the bourgeois era, these relations are maintained only in the last instance by physical force. Instead the capacity of a dominant social group to reproduce its dominance over time depends more and more on its ability to control the means by which the world is made sense of i.e. culture and ideology.....
> Culture, then, is inherently political as is the analysis: they cannot help but be so." (My emphasis)

The suggestion of this paper, however, is that 'culture' is not 'inherently political', although the conflicting views detailed above suggest even in their definitions of the concept that this must be so. This embryonic polarization based on the subtle development of the concept to 'fit in' with a particular view of society can be avoided if a more pragmatic view of 'culture' is adopted based simply on its heuristic potential. In other words, does either view of 'culture' really provide a satisfactory explanation of the relationship of our lower-class adolescent to contemporary British society? And, if not, can a synthesis of definition and a discussion of 'weaknesses' provide a more 'valid' viewpoint? In brief, the 'sceptical' approach suggested earlier in the field of deviancy theorisation must be extended to the central concept of 'culture'.

Thus, the 'conservative' tendencies of 'functionalism' led in effect to the 'disappearance of 'class' as a dynamic relation. Class was effectively reduced to the level of 'stratification' and used to describe status in society. The emphasis was placed on the discovery of 'visible' differences (e.g. income, job status, education) between individuals and/or occupational groupings which led to them being ranked differently on some scale of prestige.[1]

> "The important thing to remember about conventional social class analysis is that it is not analysis at alllbut descriptive and classificatory. Because it concentrates on visible phenomena and ignores hidden structural determinants it can say nothing about causes."

Thus, although 'class' did exist, it was stripped of its heuristic value and rendered a static rather than a processual structure, as an objective 'fact' to be studied in isolation from concepts of domination and subordination, of power. There was no place for politics in the new 'science'.[2]

1. V. Allen: 'The Differentiation of the Working Class': P.63 in A. Hunt (Ed.): Class & Class Structure: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd. 1977.
2. G. Murdock & R. McCron: PP.196-7 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance Through Rituals: op. cit.

> "...the sociologist's increasing attachment to notions of 'scientific' methodology and value-freedom led them to conceal or devalue the political dimension of their work .....Hence in much of the mainstream sociological work on youth, until comparatively recently, class has either been evacuated altogether or treated as relatively unimportant."

Mann suggests that this process of increasing scientific 'detachment' went hand in hand with a selective interpretation of changing social conditions and, in particular, industrialisation, to produce the 'End of Ideology' theorists - 'class' was 'disappearing.[1]

> "...'tradition' will give way before the modernising, secular, urban and democratic influence of industry and thus precipitate a decline in class conflict and in the ideology of class conflict..."

At the same time, 'consumption and leisure' were becoming the main concerns of the working classes; improved conditions and the public image of 'equality' made this a natural development.[2]

> "...like the embourgeoisement theorists whom they succeeded, they ('counter cultural' theorists) were convinced that consumption and leisure had replaced production and labour at the centre of social life, and that class differentials in life chances were being wiped away by nominal equality of access to life styles."

In short, it appeared that some sociologists had become 'infected' by the 'consensus' politics of the time, the view that a new 'era' had arrived - 'we've never had it so good.' Indeed, the evidence seemed to support such a view, especially when viewed selectively. However, this 'selective' interpretation of British social development became increasingly 'unreal' when faced with a growing volume of empirical data denying the 'reality' of a 'classless society'.[3]

> "We noted earlier the 1950's beliefs in the arrival of the open, classless and affluent society. The 1960's, by contrast, were noticeable for the rediscovery of both poverty and class-conflict."

This sudden reversal was greeted with some confusion by 'mainstream' sociologists but again forced into a pattern denying the

1. Michael Mann: Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class: 1973: MacMillan P.11.
2. G. Murdock & R. McCron: 'Youth and Class: The Career of a Confusion': P.23 in G. Mungham and G. Pearson (Eds.): Working Class Youth Culture: 1976 Routledge and Kegan Paul.
3. J. Clarke: 'Football Hooliganism and the Skinheads': P.14. C.C.C.S Paper 42.

possibility of conflict. Their approach could be termed 'pragmatic', a weary acceptance of empirical 'reality' and a reversion to the old, static explanations.[1]

> "The truth is that working class life has always been changing, but also that the relative economic position of that class has altered little. At certain times, it may be poorer or richer, but it is always the base of the pyramid."

On the other hand, the 'Marxist' was delighted - after all, he had been saying the same thing all the time. The 'rediscovery' of 'class' only lent new strength to his uncontradicted theoretical 'muscle'.[2]

> "Point for point, the evidence underlines the same broad conclusion: the structural inequalities of capitalist society remain marked. Disparities of economic condition, opportunity and power persist - modified, if at all, only within fairly narrow limits."

However, the 'rediscovery' of 'class' in itself would only have[3] provided a new impetus to the never-ending theoretical debate between 'functionalism' and 'marxism' with little scope for progress in terms of a view of 'culture'. In fact, the 'new' concentration on 'class' provided an opportunity to outline the 'real' effects of social change on the class structure and, in particular, an incentive to place the contemporary situation in a historical context. It is in this respect that a 'radical' view of 'culture' proves most valuable.[4]

> "The complex of social changes that had taken place since the war may not have dissolved the class structure, but they had certainly altered many ways in which people experienced and coped with it. Consequently, sociologists who acknowledged the centrality of class were presented with the problem of developing an analysis sensitive enough to cope with the complexities of the contemporary situation."

Thus, a whole series of changes affecting working class life since the war could be outlined as 'contradictions' facing the lower-classes. These changes[5] occurred in three basic areas - 'occupational', 'housing and neighbourhood', and 'leisure and consumption'. In the first,

1. B. Jackson: Working Class Community: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1968 P. 160.
2. J.H. Westergaard: 'Sociology: the Myth of Classlessness': P.144 in R. Blackburn (Ed.): Ideology in the Social Sciences: Fontana 1972.
3. See also: J. Westergaard & H. Resler: Class in a Capitalist Society: London: Heinemann Educational Books: 1975.
4. G. Murdock & R. McCron: 'Consciousness of Class...': P.198 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance Through Rituals: op. cit.
5. J. Clarke: 'Skinheads and the Study of Youth Culture': CCCS Paper 23.

'technological changes and the increasing use of mass production techniques' combined with a shift in the educational system due to the 1944 Education Act which fostered an 'ideological self-representation (of) an open, achievement-oriented system where each individual supposedly received the education he deserves'.[1] The net result was to increase unemployment and lower job satisfaction whilst raising aspirations or, at least, suggesting the possibility of upward mobility.

On the other hand, the working classes were also under attack as a 'community', mainly through immigration and redevelopment, whose net result 'was to remove the social and cultural homogeneity of the area'.[2] To be brief, the effects on 'neighbourhood culture' were double-edged.[3]

> "....the destruction of...'communal space' by removing and altering those major foci of it, the street, the local pub, and the corner shop.....
> (Also).....the breakdown of the extended kinship patterns of the neighbourhood."

Finally, the highly 'visible' area of 'leisure and consumption',[4] where the neighbourhood declined as the focus of 'leisure facilities', these largely moving to the city centres. But, more important, was the shift in the role of the working class 'user' from 'member' of the local pub, of the <u>local</u> facilities, to 'consumer' of a universally-desired leisure 'product'. This development of 'universal' leisure goals was paralleled by the move in professional football from an emphasis on the 'fan' (for whom the 'team' was an extension of the neighbourhood) to the wooing of the 'spectator', for whose benefit the game had to be commercialised.

This description of the historical changes affecting the lower classes is, of course, over-simplified, but it serves its purpose of outlining the potential advantages of a 'class analysis', of the relationship between 'class' and the underlying material structures of society. However, it is not intended to dwell on the advantages of a 'radical' view but rather to illustrate its weaknesses. To do otherwise would necessitate a total embrace of its direction which has already been suggested as unduly limiting and, in certain crucial

1.Ibid. P.3
2.Ibid. P.5.
3.Ibid. P.5.
4.Ibid. P.7.

areas, inadequate.

Thus, it has been suggested that a 'radical' view is concerned with more than a mere description of social change; 'class' is seen as a relation of domination and subordination[1] and it is in this area, rather than that of 'stimulating' historical analysis, that apparent difficulties can be discovered.[2]

> "....cultures are differently ranked, and stand in opposition to one another, in relations of domination and subordination, along the scale of 'cultural power'." (My emphasis)

Significantly, 'class' and 'culture' become synonymous. 'Culture' is seen as having a 'class' basis. In other words, the polarization of definitions illustrated earlier in this section emerges in empirical analysis. This merging of terms is not inadvertant; on the contrary, the replacement of the term 'culture' with the plural 'cultures' (or classes) is seen as crucial to the debate - diversity as opposed to unity; repression as opposed to consensus.[3]

> "It is crucial to replace the notion of 'culture' with the more concrete, historical concept of 'cultures'; a redefinition which brings out more clearly the fact that cultures always stand in relations of domination and subordination to one another, are always, in some sense, in struggle with one another." (My emphasis)

But it is this concept of 'culture' as 'class' and 'class' as entity that throws up the greatest difficulty for the 'radical' theorist.[4] In short, the difficulty of the 'Marxist', or 'Conflict', approach is that it implies (quite consciously) a distinctness of 'cultures' - the concept of 'class' is literally taken out of the debate by suggesting class opposition as a foundation for theory. 'Class' becomes a non-issue. In other words, the 'radical' theorist is able to talk in terms of 'lower-class culture' and its 'integrity' without having to suffer the criticism levelled at Miller, Cohen and other 'subcultural' theorists.[5] His position is, in his terms, secure -

1. Note. This is, of course, an over-simplification. 'Marxist' theories have also, as a central element, the idea of exploitation and the extraction of 'surplus value' but our concern here is merely with the concept of 'class' as a theoretical 'bridge' to a 'wider' view of 'culture'.
2. J. Clarke, S. Hall et al: Subcultures, Cultures & Class: P.11 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance Through Rituals: op. cit.
3. Ibid. P.12.
4. See also: A. Giddens: The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies: Hutchinson University Library: 1973.
5. See Chapter 2.

and immovable.[1]

> "I would maintain that lower class culture is perpetually recreating itself in its interactions with the dominant class.....and that its integrity depends precisely upon the continuance of this dialectic." (My emphasis)

The obvious difficulty thus becomes the relationship between the classes, the maintenance of the 'unity' of the total system and, significantly, little attention is directed towards this problem. On the contrary, a considerable amount of empirical work is directed at illustrating the 'tension' between the classes as, for example, in the study of a sample from two council estates in Barking by H.F. Moorhouse. His general conclusion is that his subjects' use of 'monetary terms' indicates their awareness of the totality of the class structure of society - a dichotomous image, of course.[2]

> "The majority view of the class system in Britain is very much a dichotomized one, very close indeed to the 'us' versus 'them' type..."

In terms of the conflict of perspectives suggested earlier, whereas the 'conservative' functionalist has difficulty in approaching 'class' in any meaningful sense, indeed, he tends to ignore its dynamic 'functions', the Marxist has the opposite problem; his view of 'class' is sophisticated and dynamic but his interpretation of the relationship between the classes fails to capture the complexity of 'interclass' relations.

Moreover, a further pressing problem faced by the 'Marxist' researcher is the seeming inadequacy of a 'two-class' model in the field. An immediate practical issue is the location of the 'middle' classes - they seem to rest uneasily with either the working classes or their capitalist 'exploiters'.[3]

> "The most important inadequacy of dichotomous interpretations of class structure is that, by their very nature, they make it conceptually difficult to recognise the existence of 'middle' classes."

This dilemma has never been satisfactorily resolved by 'Marxist' theorists, though their continuing efforts to account for apparent 'overlap', without losing the 'advantages' of a dichotomous view, must be recognised. However, all this does not mean that they deny any relationship between the 'classes', but ultimately, this can only

1. Dick Hebdige: 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies; Style and the Subversion of Form': CCCS Paper 24.
2. H.F. Moorhouse: 'Attitudes to Class...': Sociology 10 1976 P.492.
3. A. Giddens: Class Structure of the Advanced Societies: op.cit. P.101.

be a variation on the domination/subordination theme, that is to say, a unity based on diversity, on 'conflict', at first sight, a contradiction in terms. The relationship between the classes is seen as a 'struggle', as:[1]

> "....a matter of the nature of the balance struck between contending classes: the compromises made to sustain it, the relations of force, the solutions adopted.....the idea of 'permanent class hegemony', or of 'permanent incorporation', must be dropped."

Working class 'culture' is seen as 'winning space' from the 'dominant culture', as constantly 'negotiating' with its oppressors - the scene is one of perpetual conflict. That such 'conflict' does not seem to exist empirically, that society seems to 'function' as an entity reasonably smoothly, can presumably be explained away by the success of the 'dominant culture' in <u>imposing</u> an appearance of 'consensus', principally through its control of the media.[2]

In short, there seems little real difference between this posited view of distinct 'cultures' and Miller's suggestion of lower-class 'focal concerns'. Of course, Miller offers a <u>static</u> explanation with no discussion of the interrelationship between the classes, whilst the above outline has a dynamic view of 'class', but both seem intuitively to sit uneasily in one way or another with the impression of some kind of 'consensus' in contemporary British society.

An examination of the concept of 'subcultures' can perhaps shed further light on this dilemma and suggest the validity, or otherwise, of a 'radical' class analysis. Once again, it will be seen that the opposition of 'functionalist/marxist' can be uncovered with similar conceptual difficulties with regard to the interrelationship between the 'classes' or 'cultures'.

Thus, 'subcultures' have come in for a good deal of theoretical attention and empirical description from the 'Positivist' school, for example, Miller's work on working class culture has already been mentioned. However, there has always been difficulty in relating 'subcultures' to the total 'culture' of the society - researchers

1. Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resistance Through Rituals</u>: op. cit. PP.40/1.
2. For example see: CCCS, University of Birmingham: Stencilled Occasional Papers: Media Series Numbers: 4,5,7,8,9,10,11, and 34. Titles can be found in the Bibliography where they are listed numerically.

have tended to describe them in terms of 'islands' isolated from the mainland of society.[1]

> ".....subculture is not tied.....into the larger cultural complex: it refers to norms <u>that set a group apart from</u>, not those that integrate a group with, the total society." (My emphasis)

This 'separation' remains even when the definition is couched in more 'modern' terms.[2]

> "By a subculture, I mean a system of shared symbolic experiences, which evolve a set of sympathetic norms, that <u>is set apart from the larger value system</u>." (My emphasis)

With this view, it is hardly surprising that so many field workers have found difficulty in explaining the 'conventional bind' so regularly uncovered - as in the present study.

Some 'Marxist' theorists, on the other hand, do locate 'subcultures' in a 'parent culture', but the latter is itself subject to the domination/subordination equation. Thus, working class youth cultures are related to <u>their</u> 'parent culture', working class culture, not to any 'societal culture', if such a structure in fact exists.[3]

> "Working class subcultures.....take shape on the level of the social and cultural class relations <u>of the subordinate classes</u>.....They, too, win space for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or street corner." (My emphasis)

It is only through the 'parent culture' that the 'subculture' is integrated into the overall struggle between conflicting classes.[4]

> "We.....want to <u>reconstruct</u> 'sub-cultures' in terms of their relation, first to 'parent' cultures, and, through that, to the dominant culture, or better, to the struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures."

While this is undeniably more attractive than the structural-functionalist interpretation of 'subcultures' as basically free-floating social entities, it is evident that the concept of 'subculture', as with 'culture', has been subordinated to the central assertion of society as a unity based on 'conflict' rather than 'consensus', contradictory as this may seem. 'Subcultures' are located in a context, but that context is itself restricted.

1.J. Milton Younger:'Contraculture & Subculture': PP.124/5 in D.O. Arnold (Ed.) <u>The Sociology of Subcultures</u>: 1970 Glendessary Press.
2.M. Brake:'Cultural Revolution or Alternative Delinquency': PP.35/6 in R. Bailey & J. Young (Eds.) <u>Contemporary Social Problems in Britain</u>: Saxon House 1973.
3.Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resist. through Rituals</u>: op.cit.P.45. 4.Ibid. P.16.

Thus, even 'teenage culture', in the sense of an amalgam of diffuse leisure aspirations and commercial pressures is happily accommodated into this structure. In the first place, the apparent diffusion of 'teenage culture' through the classes is only a measure of the success of the dominant class in asserting its hegemony, not an example of a diffuse 'consensus', of a symbolic 'umbrella'.[1]

> "Ordinary standards of aspiration may to a growing extent be set by the levels in fact achieved only by the prosperous minority - through direct comparison, or under the impact of advertising and the mass media generally."

Again, 'teenage culture' can in no way be regarded as an entity separated from the class structure, as a web of goals and aspirations clung to by the mass of adolescents, though perhaps invested in more heavily by the lower classes. Rather, it is very simply a system of exploitation and can thus be dismissed as an element in the hegemonic control of the ruling class.[2]

> "We have attempted.....to place the development of working class youth cultural style into the context of economic and political changes in the wider society, but specifically to understand these changes as being apprehended and used by the consumer-oriented branches of capitalist production for marketing purposes and the regeneration <u>of a viable culture for sales</u>." (My emphasis)

Indeed, the concept of 'youth' is very important to the analysis of contemporary British Society in 'radical' terms, though the cursory treatment meted out to the concept of 'teenage culture' perhaps indicates the direction of this importance. Whereas 'traditional' criminology has seen youth and, in particular, lower-class youth, as the prime seat of 'subcultures', as an entity somehow separated from or in direct opposition to the wider society, the 'radical' theorist integrates 'youth' into the total pattern of domination and subordination - the study of 'youth' is not a 'side-track' but an integral part of the analysis of 'cultures'.[3]

> "Youth as a social category seems to have the power to carry a deeper message about the state of society, the social and political changes taking place and so on, without recourse to the language of politics itself."

1.J.H. Westergaard: P.128 in R. Blackburn: <u>Ideology in Social Science</u>: op. cit.
2.I. Taylor & D. Wall:'Beyond the Skinheads': P.120 in Mungham & Pearson: <u>Working Class Youth Culture</u>: op. cit.
3.J. Clarke: 'The Three R's:- Repression, Rescue and Rehabilitation': <u>CCCS Paper 41</u> P.4.

In short, 'youth' takes a central place as an indicator of 'class conflict', as the weak link in the social structure through which anxieties and 'contradictions' emerge in symbolic form. This analysis does not apply only to the working class but to the relationship between the classes which has allegedly been put under strain by the complex of social changes that has affected post-war British society.[1]

> "The massive social upheaval of post-war British society, interpreted as a steady progression towards 'never having had it so good', was actually <u>experienced</u> as a social and cultural crisis. The crisis, to reduce it to its basic element, was about the consequences of changes in the social, economic and cultural relations between the classes ....And one of the principal ways in which this anxiety was focussed was through a preoccupation with <u>youth</u>."

Attention was therefore directed at the 'mythology of a universal youth culture'[2] created by a 'consensus' view of society, at the simplistic view of 'youth culture' as a 'sort of collective compensation for those who could not succeed.'[3] The analytical study of 'youth' as an entity is theoretically inadequate simply because 'youth' does not form a 'real' category; its analysis must take place <u>within</u> the class structure of society. In fact, to illustrate this argument by exaggeration, in a sense 'youth' can be banished from analysis as a meaningful concept.[4]

> "Working class young people are, in sociological terms, an actual and potential <u>labour force</u> and it is this (not their youth) which determines their social situation and structures their institutional arrangements."

Certainly, this view has its attractions because, as discussed previously, the attempts to study 'youth' in isolation from wider structures have always encountered difficulties in presenting a description of the subject which 'fits in' with observed behaviour. However, having suggested the banishment of 'youth' as a sociological category and substituted 'youth' as a heuristic concept in a 'class' or 'cultural' context, it is erroneous to insist on a total unity between the generations - the adolescent and, in particular, the lower class adolescent, does have special problems within the class structure that must be 'negotiated', mainly within the areas of employment

1. Jefferson et al: 'Mugging and Law 'n' Order': <u>C.C.C.S. Paper 35</u> P.24.
2. Hall and Jefferson: <u>Resistance through Rituals</u>: op. cit. P. 30.
3. Ibid. P.28
4. P. Corrigan and S. Frith: 'The Politics of Youth Culture': P.236 in Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resistance Through Rituals</u>: op. cit.

and education.[1]

> "...whilst many youth cultural responses have the same structured 'root', since both parents and offspring, as members of the same class fraction, have similar negotiations to make with the dominant culture....not all of them are of this nature. Some youth cultural responses are engendered by structural conditions that are quite specific to youth."

Thus, in a 'radical' view of 'cultures', 'youth' is seen as playing a central role in the articulation of class 'contradictions'. The reaction of youth in its class context provides an insight not only into its own relationship with <u>its</u> 'parent culture', but also into the broader conflicts in contemporary social structure. The means of objectifying these 'contradictions' is provided by '<u>style</u>', which becomes the centre of analysis, the stage for the description of the struggle for '<u>meaning</u>'. 'Style' is the symbolic expression of the underlying class structure, a limited expression of 'class consciousness.'[2]

> "Subcultural styles can therefore be seen as coded expressions of class consciousness transposed into the specific context of youth and reflective of the complex way in which age acts as a mediation both of class experience and of class consciousness."

A further analysis of 'style' will be undertaken in the chapter on 'expressive culture'(Chapter 6) but it suffices here to indicate its centrality as a tool for the 'radical' analysis of the dynamic of the class structure. However, the attractiveness of this concept should not hide its obvious limitations. As with the rest of the concepts underlying a 'radical' view of 'culture', it is based on the assumption of a society riven by relationships of domination and subordination; the dynamic of society, the push for change, is provided by this 'conflict' which also, paradoxically, provides the framework for an overall unity in that a class has a hegemony which it in effect 'negotiates', 'trades away', for an acceptance of subordination by the other classes. The appearance of 'consensus' is in fact a 'superficial' covering for an intense pattern of shifting balance, of compromises and adaptations on both sides.

This elaborate framework is to some extent validated by the 'discovery' and description of subcultural 'styles' and their relation to the socio-historical pattern of the class problematic. But, 'style' is

1.J. Clarke & T. Jefferson:'The Politics of Popular Culture':<u>C.C.C.S. Paper 14</u> P.5.
2.G. Murdock & R. McCron: 'Consciousness of Class....': P.203 in Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resistance through Rituals</u>: op. cit.

limited as an analytical tool; it ignores whole areas of working class life which are 'dismissed' as the 'natural' consequence of the class situation - an assumption which stirs uneasy thoughts of lower class culture theorists and their problems in explaining the relationship of subcultural 'values' to a broader entity, whether 'parent culture' or the total society. The emphasis is unashamedly on the analysis of 'style' as an infrequent expression of underlying 'contradictions'. In brief, apparent 'styles' are seized on and forced into the analysis to the exclusion of other 'subcultural' phenomena - a restricted exercise, and admittedly so.[1]

> "Some youth sub-cultures are regular and persistent features of the parent class culture: the ill-famed 'culture of delinquency' of the working class adolescent male, for example. But some subcultures appear only at particular historical moments: they become visible, are identified and labelled.....It is the latter kind of subcultural formation which primarily concerns us here."
> (My emphasis)

'Ill-famed' the 'culture of delinquency' may be, but it cannot be ignored, or even glossed over. It is not enough to emphasise specific historical moments as the 'real' focus for analysis, whilst neglecting to explain more persistent phenomena. It might be argued that this 'neglect' is due to an inability to approach detail except on the superficially broad level of 'conflict' and 'struggle'. Of course, the 'radical' theorist might answer that 'delinquency' is a simple response to the problematic of a class, within that class, and therefore does not present an overview, as does 'style'.

A further criticism might be that the processes of transmission of 'style' are themselves vague and left, perhaps 'conveniently', unelaborated. For example, the genesis of a 'style' and the point at which fashion and commercial pressures take it over is always problematic. The initial experience of the structural 'contradictions' may be very restricted. In other words, the analytic aspect of 'style' may be greatly subordinated to the 'efficiency' of 'teenage culture' as an amalgam of 'trends' and commercial pressures. For the majority within the same class situation, 'style' may be interpreted merely as 'fashion', as 'trend', and not as an expression of their subordination. Hence, the rather contradictory admission of the superficiality of 'youth culture' on a broader level.[2]

1. Hall & Jefferson: Resistance through Rituals; op. cit. P.14.
2. J. Clarke & T. Jefferson: 'Politics of Popular Culture': CCCS Paper 14 P.9.

> "What characterizes most youth culture is the search for excitement, autonomy and identity - the freedom to create their own meanings for their existence and to symbolically express those, rather than simply accepting the existing dominant meanings."

This creation of 'meaning' can run the whole gamut of responses from 'fashion' to 'style' as described by the 'radical' theorist. Hence the importance for the 'radical' of minimising any view of 'teenage culture' as a general, but diffuse, set of adolescent leisure aspirations and its relegation to the level of 'exploitation', as outlined earlier. The processes of transmission are thus <u>neutralised</u> as a potential limitation of the dynamic of 'style'.

'Style' as the empirical validation of a 'radical' view of contemporary British society brings the discussion to the need for either a choice or a theoretical 'synthesis', with regard to a 'cultural perspective' as an empirical priority. The choice would be between a 'functionalist' or a 'marxist' view of society, and, in particular, of 'culture'. A 'synthesis' would recognise the attractions of both viewpoints but also their limitations in the field with regard to a 'practical' view of 'culture', some of which are suggested above.

In short, the crucial point is the establishment of a framework into which the empirical discovery of some kind of 'conventional bind', of a 'commitment' to an overriding 'morality', can be comfortably located. Apart from obvious contradictions of detail, both schools of thought have a central difficulty in explaining the overlapping of objectively-present 'cultures' (classes), that is, <u>the co-existence of unity and diversity</u> in a relatively 'stable' structure.

Thus, the 'Marxist' would agree the existence of a 'consensus' but insist that this is itself merely an expression of the success of the 'dominant culture' in imposing its views. It cannot be accepted merely as 'consensus'. Rather, it must be re-worked, adapted and discussed within a 'class' problematic.[1]

> "...localised conceptions of class are developed within the overall framework provided by the hegemonic ideology. They are consequently the products not only of people's persistent efforts to impose meaning on their own immediate experience of inequality and subordination, but also of their attempts to appropriate and rework the definitions of the situation offered by mass communications and education systems."

1.G. Murdock & R. McCron: 'Consciousness of Class....': P.202 in Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resistance through Rituals</u>: op. cit.

Any overlapping between 'cultures' must be seen as an attempt to improve one side of the balance in the 'struggle'. Since 'culture' and 'class' are synonymous, there is really little need to ponder the relationship between 'classes' or 'cultures' - this is a non-issue, relegated to the level of 'propaganda' and 'ideology'.

For the field worker, however, faced with the existence of some kind of 'consensus', even if only at the level of 'morality', the relationship between different groups in society must be of central importance. In this respect, the 'functionalist' view has its attractions - the divisions of 'class' are subordinated to an overall unity. Unfortunately, a total inversion of the pattern itself leads to difficulty in explaining the <u>differences</u> between groups, or 'classes' and an underplaying of inequality as a factor in a <u>dynamic</u> analysis; description tends to be <u>static</u> and unduly limiting. How, for example, does one explain the relationship of 'class' to general or 'key' norms and values? Indeed, how does one explain empirical findings of 'differences' between groups, 'classes', 'subcultures', whatever, if all are subsumed by the total entity?

In short, what is needed is not an acceptance of either view, but a 'cultural analysis' based on the crucial area of the 'overlap', the 'interpenetration', between 'cultures'. Thus, there is a 'class structure' in contemporary British society. Moreover, it would not appear to be the <u>static</u> structure suggested, and then largely ignored, by the 'structural-functionalists'. Rather, it is a <u>dynamic relation based on interest</u>.

In this regard, the existence of relations of domination and subordination must be accepted. There is a 'power structure' in society; there are the oppressed and the oppressors; there is privilege and deprivation. However, this 'conflict' must be accepted without its ideological overtones - 'repression' need not necessarily imply a self-conscious awareness of 'injustice' on the part of the 'oppressed'. Indeed, there is very little evidence of a general feeling of 'repression' among the working classes. It is in this respect that Marxist or 'conflict' theories seem most contrived. Indeed, the 'radical' theorist is often forced to resort to an inversion of apparent 'consensus' into the concepts of 'lack of consciousness' and 'false consciousness'. Thus, the working classes may 'appear' to be 'conservative' and quiescent, but this can be explained by their lack of 'awareness'

of their plight. Fortunately, the 'conflict' theorist is able to see beyond <u>their</u> 'reality' <u>to</u> 'reality' - the structures of 'repression'. To illustrate, empirical findings of 'dissociation' from work as a source of satisfaction are translated by the 'Marxist' into a 'dualistic consciousness'.[1]

> "Forced to alienate his own productive powers in return for economic rewards, the worker develops a dualistic consciousness, in which control and money, work and non-work, become separate."

It is this further 'logical' step from the allegedly 'superficial' consciousness of the subject to his 'real' consciousness that constantly grates against 'objectivity' as a non-ideological concept. Although there is little evidence of 'revolutionary' consciousness, or even real 'class conflict', the Marxist must always translate his originally stimulating theories of 'power' and 'class interest' into a vision of the future.

The 'Functionalist', on the other hand, could benefit from an injection of 'conflict', of class 'struggle', into his 'integrated' system which has at times seemed unable to explain - or even see - the <u>diversity</u> of 'cultures' and, especially, the existence of 'power' in society. His contribution would be mainly a re-assertion of society as some kind of 'unit' within which 'interest' and 'power' must work out their relationship. In other words, the emphasis must not be confined to the struggle for 'power', or its redress, but should be directed equally towards an explanation of the apparent 'stability' of contemporary British (or Scottish) society. Based on inequality, on relationships of domination and subordination, on 'exploitation', how do the different 'classes' or 'cultures' combine to give an impression not of conflict, but of stability? What are the mechanisms that, on the one hand, place the working class boy of this study in a situation of 'deprivation' as far as employment, education and leisure are concerned,[2] and, on the other hand, allow him to function as an 'integrated' member of society? Certainly, the evidence does not support his removal from it. 'Delinquent' or 'anti-social' behaviour forms a very small part of his total social commitment. Indeed, in many ways, it can be regarded as <u>situational involvement</u>, as having little effect on his total social identity.

1. Michael Mann: op. cit. P.33.
2. See Chapter 1.

Culture as a 'Material/Expressive' Dialectic.

Initially, this chapter concentrated on developing an empirical view of 'consensus', of some kind of 'integration' into a wider structure than simply the working class neighbourhood. This was followed by the suggestion that 'Marxist' and 'Functionalist' definitions of 'culture' and 'class' are inadequate to cope with the co-existent unity and diversity of contemporary British society. The 'reality' of attachment to both local and societal structures is so complex as to require a more heuristic and exploratory definition of 'culture'.

Thus, for example, some 'Marxist' theorists lay great emphasis on the underlying structures of contemporary capitalist society and suggest that other sociologists and the media essentially avoid any meaningful discussion of patterns of structural inequality and exploitation because of their limited concern with the 'existent', with a 'surface reality'. In short, they are doing nothing more significant than disseminating and operating on the prevailing ideological conceptions as to how society should, and does, operate.

However, in this elevation of their own, deeper, analysis, they miss the fundamental point that these 'epiphenomena' are largely limited by symbol and further that a discussion of the 'mechanisms' of ideology is a crucial element in any understanding of the maintenance of 'stability' as symbolic 'consensus', rather than as a reactionary, hegemonic process to be dismissed as a simple manifestation of class 'repression'. Thus, for example, the 'conflict' between different interest groups (e.g. between workers and employers) often- especially in the case of major disputes - played out through the media, is in fact a symbolic 'conflict' in terms of the existent. The argument is carefully limited and the boundaries of meaningful discussion set. Those who try to take the argument further are labelled out of the debate, branded as 'communists', 'marxists', or just 'militants' (i.e. 'outsiders'). Union leaders are therefore usually keen to be classified as 'moderate', a label essential to the gaining of 'public' support.

The point of this example (agreed it is impressionistic in the extreme) is that 'Marxist' theorists tend to dismiss this manoeuvering as 'ideological', as an example of the effectiveness of the rulers in imposing their definitions on the debate. However, this obscures the theoretical importance of this symbolic process of 'moderation' which

indeed is one of the processes by which stability (not 'repression') is maintained.

Not to overplay this argument, the point is that both Marxism and Structural-Functionalism (arguably, the 'major' approaches to structure) tend to undermine the concept of 'culture' and to subordinate it to a 'greater' purpose. Thus, 'Functionalists' tend to see 'culture' (see the previous section) as a simple process of transmission, the means by which knowledge, skills, norms and values are passed on from one generation to another. In this endeavour, symbol is either omitted altogether or seen as simply static naming; language, for example, provides <u>categories</u> for the ordering of objects in the world around us. Moreover, the use of the term 'functional' implies that those structures persist that play a part in the maintenance of 'stability', that have a 'function'. Marshall Sahlins,[1] to whom this discussion of the primacy of 'culture' owes a great deal, points out succintly that in fact the concept of 'function' does not precede a 'cultural scheme' but is subordinate to it. In other words, structures that are 'functional' for advanced industrial society might not, indeed probably would not, be so for 'primitive' tribal society. 'Culture' then decides on the 'functional' scheme to be adopted - it has <u>primacy</u>.[2]

> "....no functional explanation is ever sufficient by itself; for functional value is always <u>relative to</u> the given cultural scheme." (My emphasis)

Some 'Marxists', on the other hand, tend to subordinate 'culture' to the wider cause of 'class' and suggest that, insofar as 'symbol' does have a role, it is in the area of 'ideology'.[3]

> "There is again the fault, shared by Marx with certain functional-dualists, of limiting symbol to 'ideology', thus allowing action to slip into the kingdom of the <u>pragmatic</u>." (My emphasis)

However, in so doing, they fail to recognise the essentially symbolic nature of the system <u>they</u> create. As in the case of 'function', 'practicality' does not exist independently of 'culture' but is determined <u>by it</u>. Indeed, the very concept of 'utility' is a 'cultural' form, a selection of a particular set of means and ends from a multitude of alternatives on 'cultural' criteria rather than on simple 'material effectiveness'.[4]

1.Marshall Sahlins; <u>Culture & Practical Reason</u>; Univ. of Chicago Press 1976.

2.Ibid. P.206. 3.Ibid. P.139 4.Ibid. P.166.

> "Conceiving the creation and movement of goods solely from their pecuniary qualities (exchange-value), one ignores the cultural code of concrete properties governing 'utility' and so remains unable to account for what is in fact produced."

Ultimately, then, production must be subordinated to a 'cultural intention' rather than the reverse. If, to quote Marshall Sahlins' example, 'pants are produced for men' and 'skirts for women', this is not due to the nature of the object 'per se' but to the creation of the object, the <u>appropriation</u> of the 'material', by the 'symbolic system.'[1]

> "Production, therefore, is something more and other than a practical logic of material effectiveness. <u>It is a cultural intention</u>." (My emphasis)

To be perhaps a little bold, the error in Marxism, with regard to its view of 'culture' at least, is that it fails to recognise the primacy of symbol. Man begins 'as man' when he experiences the world as a concept with <u>meaning</u> i.e. <u>symbolically</u>. It is this which distinguishes him from the animal world, whose relationship with the 'material' is determined by what <u>is</u>. Man, on the other hand, is capable of, and does, create 'utility' and 'practical significance'.

It is in the pursuit of 'utility' and the 'material' that both 'Marxists' and 'Structural-Functionalists' unwittingly subordinate the priority of 'culture' to another, more 'practical' purpose. For both, 'culture' is separated from society and seen as evidence of other 'realities'. On the one hand, the 'Functionalists' would have us believe that 'culture' is simply an amalgam of knowledge, customs, beliefs, norms and values that are passed on from one generation to another in order to allow the 'structures' of society, the basic 'institutions', to be maintained through time. On the other hand, the 'Marxist' would see this view of 'culture' as 'ideology', the systematic maintenance and 'justification' of inequality; <u>his purpose</u> would be the elaboration of 'cultural' processes as a means of describing the 'class structure' of contemporary capitalist society. <u>Both</u> subordinate man to structure, <u>both</u> obscure the 'cultural' basis of society, <u>both</u> have a limited and inadequate view of 'symbol' as the prime mechanism of '<u>meaning</u>'.[2]

> "All these types of practical reason have also in common

1. Ibid. P.169.
2. Ibid. P.102.

> an impoverished conception of human symboling. For all of them, the cultural scheme is the sign of other realities.. None of them has been able to exploit fully the anthropological discovery that the creation of meaning is the distinguishing and constituting quality of man..."
> (My emphasis)

Marshall Sahlins, on the other hand, suggests that, contrary to the views of some theorists, the symbolic process has not been destroyed, merely obscured. Instead of being located in kinship relations, as in more 'primitive' societies, it is located in the 'production of goods'.[1]

> "...the peculiarity of Western culture is the institutionalization of the (symbolic) process in and as the production of goods, by comparison with a 'primitive' world where the locus of symbolic differentiation remains social relations, principally kinship relations, and other spheres of activity are ordered by the operative distinctions of kinship."

Capitalism, for Sahlins, is no 'sheer rationality' but a particular form of 'cultural order'. Any attempt to see it as a form of 'practical reason', taking primacy over the 'cultural', is destined to be inadequate and limiting. Moreover, any such attempt ultimately suggests the subordination of man to material circumstance whereas, in fact, the reverse is the case - man creates meaning and he equally creates capitalism. The goods produced by industry do not make sense when regarded simply in terms of 'utility', a concept which is relative to the given 'cultural' scheme. A meaningful analysis can only be arrived at by suggesting the 'order of goods' as in one sense a 'practical' realisation of the 'cultural order'. The objects produced only have meaning in terms of the 'cultural code' that assigns that meaning - in themselves, they are mere objects.[2]

> "By the systematic arrangement of meaningful differences assigned the concrete, the cultural order is realised also as an order of goods. The goods stand as an object code for the signification and valuation of persons and occasions, functions and situations."

To illustrate the primacy of the symbolic process, of the 'cultural code', Sahlins suggests that we need only look at 'mere appearance'. He points out that this is a key symbolic image of 'worth'. Clothing is more than material object; on the contrary, it carries the ability to tell us a great deal (whether truthfully or not is another matter) about perfect strangers - we are able to order them, to place

1. Ibid. P.211
2. Ibid. P.178.

them in some category, itself a cultural product.[1]

> "(Clothing)....serve(s) as a language of everyday life among those who may well have no prior intercourse or acquaintance. 'Mere appearance' must be one of the most important forms of symbolic statement in Western civilization."

However, it is in particulars that Sahlins' interpretation of 'culture' begins to be limiting. Thus, he tends to <u>overstate</u> the importance of clothing as a symbolic statement, although it is true that, on a superficial level at least, it does provide a means of coherence to random interaction, for example, in public places. In this way, persons from a different cultural background, e.g. asians, will stand out, not only on the grounds of their colour, but also because of their dress. In fact, younger immigrants, anxious to identify with their peers and their 'new' cultural connections, sometimes express this in their rejection of traditional dress - they display their 'Englishness' in their 'English' clothes.

It is not the intention of this discussion to validate Marshall Sahlins' particular view of the 'cultural order', of symbolic structure. His merit has been in asserting the primacy of 'culture' over 'practical reason'. 'Culture' cannot be separated from 'society' and treated as a mere 'mirror' reflecting 'deeper' structures. On the contrary, the 'cultural order', the creation of meaning, takes <u>primacy</u> over the 'structural' elements of society which in turn reflect a particular 'cultural code'.

It is this neglect of an adequate view of 'culture' as a <u>symbolic</u> code affecting our interactions, not only with each other, but also with our material surroundings, that has tended to impoverish both 'Marxist' and 'Structural-Functionalist' interpretations of social structure. The place they allow for <u>meaning</u>, for <u>creativity</u>, is often secondary to their search for a limited and partial 'reality'. They forget that their starting point should be man, not 'practical reason'. 'Rationality' is a poor substitute for 'symbol'.

The priority of this chapter is the development of an heuristic view of 'culture' that elevates 'meaning' to a central position and avoids the 'trivialisation' of symbolic structures with such concepts as 'ideology' and 'function'. An 'alternative' view of 'culture' is suggested which allows for the maintenance of inequality, 'repression'

1. Ibid. P.203.

and 'exploitation', while at the same time facilitating the creation of meaning out of deprivation and even, at least symbolically, allowing its 'transcendence'. This explanation does not regard the manoeuvering of interest groups as simply 'ideological', as an example of the 'hegemonic power' of the 'ruling class', but rather as indicative of the centrality of symbolic limitation in maintaining 'order'. Any alternative view necessarily trivialises the complexity of symbolic mechanisms facilitating 'stability'.

To this end, it is useful to represent in diagrammatic form this heuristic view of 'culture' (see Figure 1) as comprising 'material' and 'expressive' elements in a dialectical relationship based on symbol. Such an attempt tends to over-simplify the issues involved but may allow greater clarity to the key concepts. Again, it should be pointed out that this diagram represents 'culture' in a capitalist society (as indeed, contemporary British society would appear to be, leaving aside such debate as suggests a 'post-industrial' society, 'advanced' capitalism, and so on). The reader will have to decide whether this limitation is justified; for my part, I would suggest that it at least allows an exploratory definition of 'culture' in terms of a 'material/expressive' dialectic.

Cultural Conditions - 'Key Images'.

The diagrammatic representation of a 'material/expressive' view of culture (Fig. 1) suggests the centrality of 'key images' as an element in the cultural conditions (on a societal level) to which 'material culture' must provide an ongoing adaptation. However, the concept of central or 'key' elements of cultures is not a new idea and anthropologists have devoted some attention to their definition.[1]

> "It is by no means a novel idea that each culture has certain key elements which, in an ill-defined way, are crucial to its distinctive organisation. Since the publication of Benedict's 'Patterns of Culture' in 1934, the notion of such key elements has persisted in American anthropology."

Ortner, for example, goes on to suggest 'key symbols' as a continuum with each end an ideal type, i.e. 'summarizing' vs. 'elaborating' symbols. The former are those symbols which 'sum up' in an 'emotionally powerful' way what the system means - an example would be the American Flag. 'Elaborating' symbols, on the other hand, are

1. Sherry B. Ortner: 'On Key Symbols': American Anthropologist Vol.75,2 1973 P.1338.

Figure 1: 'Material/Expressive' Culture.

Mode of Production.
(Capitalism)

Material Conditions.
The Political system/Place in labour market, educational system, housing, etc. etc...

Cultural Conditions.
Relationship to the dominant ideology (as producers, defenders, communicators or recipients).
'Key images' - embedded in and disseminated through key institutions (workplace, media, schools, church, etc...)

Material Culture
The Class experience of differential circumstance i.e. How to be middle or working class - a continuing, generational adaptation/Includes physical cultural elements e.g. pubs, bookies, football etc. in working class area.

'Contradictions/Deprivations' necessarily thrown up in the interrelationship material culture & material/cultural conditions e.g. between 'key images' & reality of manual labour.

Expressive Culture
Symbolic: Temporary & specific rather than continuing & general. 'Safety valve'. Two main forms.

Meaning Structures.
Impose meaning on reality of monotony and exploitation e.g. 'shop floor culture'.

Symbolic Adaptations.
Defuse or 'transcend' contradictions e.g. 'key image' of education versus reality of manual labour - 'counter school culture'.

essentially 'analytic' and provide 'vehicles' for sorting out complex feelings and ideas in the interests of meaning and communication.

Two categories of 'elaborating symbol' are suggested - the first, 'root metaphors', are 'symbols with great conceptual elaborating power', for example, the computer in contemporary society.[1] The second is the 'key scenario' which is useful as a means of implying clear-cut ways of acting, appropriate to 'correct and successful living in the culture'.[2] Again, an example illustrates this concept quite nicely - the poor boy who works hard and makes good in American society.

However, valuable though this work is as a suggestion of the centrality and detail of 'key symbols', the concept of 'culture' itself is not really extended. The emphasis, as in Sahlins' work (discussed earlier), is on one aspect of the symbolic dimension rather than on the complexity of the interrelationship between symbolic structure and material/cultural circumstance. A similar criticism can be advanced with regard to the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies[3] where a recognition of the importance of 'key images' is subordinated to a 'class' interpretation of society and social issues.

Before entering into a discussion of 'material' and 'expressive' culture and their interrelationship both with each other and with the prevailing material/cultural conditions in contemporary British society, it is necessary to discuss in some detail the role of 'key images' as both a factor in 'consensus' and 'control'. Indeed, 'key images' play an essential part in maintaining the symbolic unity of the system as well as providing a set of cultural 'guidelines' to which 'material culture' must provide an ongoing, continuing, generational adaptation. In one sense, they are an element in the ideological domination of one group by another but in a far more 'subtle' and 'dynamic' way than is commonly supposed. When the question of symbolic 'limits' to debate was raised earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that these 'limits' are based on certain 'images' of what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' - diffuse symbolic structures but powerful enough to exercise control over the scope of the debate. A cursory glance at the media with regard to industrial disputes, especially those with 'national' repercussions, is sufficient to reveal

1. Ibid. P.1340.
2. Ibid. P.1341.
3. For example see: Jefferson et al: 'Mugging and Law 'n' Order': CCCS Paper 35 P.16.

the intensity of this push for 'moderation'.

'Key images' then are a factor in 'stability'. In a sense, they provide a mechanism for the 'integration' of distinct 'material' cultures based on the self-evident differential conditions in contemporary society. However, this 'integrative' (or 'ideological') role should not overshadow the dynamic elements in this process. The 'key images' are themselves always in a state of flux, reacting in turn to changes in the underlying material conditions (e.g. the development of 'shop floor militancy', the increase in immigration, redevelopment, and so on) and to 'pressure' from the various 'material cultures'. Again, symbolic adaptations, to be considered later, may also become gradually 'accepted' and pass into the realm of 'key images'. For example, the general 'acceptance' of youth's 'obsession' with music, innovation and fashion - 'youth culture', once castigated in the early '50's, has become 'accepted' and 'expected', even adopted as an essential element in idustrial output - the 'teenage market'.

'Key images' then only remain valid when they can be broadly said to be generally applicable. Thus, the 'key images' governing the management/worker relationship in the early part of this century based on deference and obedience would scarcely be acceptable in to-day's more 'democratic' climate. 'Key images' then are responsive to changes in the material conditions to which they are an 'integrative' adaptation on a societal level. Another useful example would be the changes in the attitudes to marriage and the family during this century - one could not easily compare the current 'key images' of family life based on 'meaningful' parent/child interrelationships with the more 'repressive' system based on the centrality and authority of the father.

It is interesting that the concept of general 'understandings' and 'orientations' to the problematic of existence have been current in sociology, and especially in anthropology (mentioned earlier) for some time. Thus, Paul Rock usefully suggests the 'taken for granted' nature of these 'understandings'. This, in fact, is an important feature of 'key images'; they are so 'universal' and commonplace - and diffuse - that we tend either to overlook them completely or dismiss them as examples of 'ideological' diffusion, whereas in reality, they are much more.[1]

1. Paul Rock: 'The Sociology of Deviance and Conceptions of Moral Order': PP.139-49 British Journal of Criminology 14 1974.

> "...At the deeper levels, it (more useful work) might unearth understandings which are so universally taken for granted that they are not even noticed by those who maintain them. These background beliefs permit transactions to develop between structurally distinct groups."

As an element affecting the 'material/expressive' dialectic, the concept of 'key images' seems most obvious and requires least elaboration. However, it is useful to point out the prime 'mechanism' for the transmission of these 'images' and then to describe briefly some of the elements observed in contemporary British society.

In fact, the very complexity of industrial society has made the dependence on the 'integrative' value of 'key images' increasingly important, while at the same time centralising the media as their prime transmitter. 'Marxist' theorists provide the best information on the role of the media, though, predictably, they describe the process in terms of 'power' and 'ideology'.[1]

> "They (mass media systems) 'connect' the centres of power with the dispersed publics: they mediate the public discourse between elites and the governed. Thus they become, pivotally, the site and terrain on which the making and shaping of consent is exercised, and to some degree, contested. They are key institutions in the operation of cultural hegemony." (My emphasis)

The difference between a 'Marxist' and an 'expressive' analysis would be that, whereas the 'Marxist' sees 'images' as imposed on the public - simply 'ideological' - 'expressive' culture favours an 'integrative' rather than a 'repressive' interpretation. Thus, for example, 'moral panics' are an illustration of the utility of 'key images', such as 'law and order', in a problematic situation (such as the outbreak of 'mugging' in the early '70's[2]), rather than an example of an over-reaction by controlling interest groups.

However, although the evidence is largely impressionistic, mainly supported by the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies,[3] a brief description of some 'key images' is necessary to clarify the theoretical base of this concept as a central element in the cultural conditions to which 'material/expressive' culture is an adaptation. Thus, one example might be the 'value' of 'education' in the sense of a necessity 'for getting on'. Indeed, in spite of the obvious,

1. Stuart Hall: 'The Structured Communication of Events': CCCS Paper 5 P.35.
2. S. Hall et al: Policing the Crisis: op. cit.
3. University of Birmingham: op. cit.

empirically-demonstrated fact of the differential impact of education, there is still a general belief that 'you can make it if you want to' - 'it's all a question of hard work'. In fact, in the case of this research, those parents that were spoken to on this subject specifically blamed their son's educational failure on his 'disinterest', not on the 'system'.

Another 'image' frequently occurring in the media is that of 'crime and punishment'. Here the suggestion is that 'news' about crime is necessary as a means of setting and reinforcing the symbolic boundaries of behaviour. The media constantly tell us that this or that deserves our 'outrage' and periodically focusses attention ('moral panic') on a particular type of 'deviant' act e.g. 'mugging' or, in the contemporary industrial relations scene, 'secondary picketing'.[1]

> "'News' about crime and punishment thus plays an important social function in demonstrating where the moral, legal and normative boundary lines which define 'society' fall and how they are applied."

On a more diffuse level, there is a cluster of images including 'respectability', 'work' and 'discipline'.[2] Whatever our individual stake in the future of capitalist society, we are all expected to work (witness the notorious 'social security scroungers') and this work is in itself an essential element in our 'respectability'. Whether one is a factory labourer or a wealthy entrepreneur, the suggestion is that, by doing your job, you gain the moral status of a 'trier', a person with 'self-respect'. Again, whatever the difficulty of our personal situation, social 'discipline' is an absolute imperative - we must 'make do'. Thus, those who have crumbled under 'unbearable' loads may still suffer the burden of public disapproval, even though this 'distaste' may be tempered with sympathy e.g. the 'battered' wife who in turn 'batters' her child.

Another 'image' is that of the 'law'. Whatever may be the weaknesses of individual policemen, judges, or lawmakers, the abstract principle of the 'rule of law' is paramount. Thus, when there is a sudden upsurge of public unrest, especially in cases of industrial 'conflict', the media solemnly assert the awesome alternative to the 'rule of law' - 'anarchy'.

1.S. Hall et al: 'Newsmaking and Crime': CCCS Paper 37 P.2.
2.S. Hall et al: Policing the Crisis: op. cit. P.144.

Linked in a complex way with the 'images' of social control (the 'Law', 'Crime and Punishment', etc.) is that of the 'minority/majority'.[1] Whatever the merits of the 'underdog', usually connected in some way with the manual dimension, any solution must inevitably be acceptable to the 'majority'. Moreover, the 'moderating' appeal to the aggrieved 'minority' is that of 'fair play' - remember, you are only in the 'minority'.[2]

> "....this minority/majority paradigm in its amplified form has become one of the most persistent 'inferential structures' in the signification of political deviance of all types in the political domain and in the media. It has long since become a standard 'deep structure'....."

Interrelating with these aspects of diffuse 'control', or rather, 'self-control', is the image of 'common-sense', which applies throughout the social structure. Ultimately, any 'problem' can be resolved with a 'bit of common-sense'. In fact, it is 'common-sense' that has made the British 'what they are to-day'.[3]

> "This universalising of 'common sense' masks the important differences between class experiences; but it also establishes a false coincidence of ideas between different classes. This coincidence then becomes the basis for the myth of a single, English kind of thought."(My emphasis)

'Common-sense' is the reference to the concrete, the value of 'experience', the 'existent'. In any 'difficult' situation, it is possible to resolve differences, providing both parties 'keep their feet on the ground', recognise the 'realities' of the situation. After all, 'theory' is worth nothing compared to 'experience' - 'it's the years on the job that count, not your college diplomas'.

Other 'images' include the 'family' - a 'sacred' institution even to-day. Ideally, parents should 'stick together', co-operate, for the benefit of 'the children'. Marriage itself should be 'fulfilling', stable - and 'happy'. Within this complex of 'images' of the 'family', there are many sub-images, such as 'acceptable' treatment of children (witness the 'national' horror at child 'battering'), the role of the wife, father as the 'provider', and so on.

These then are a very few of the 'key images' that circulate in dynamic fashion throughout the differing levels of society. Indeed, their centrality is so 'taken-for-granted' that there is little real

1.Stuart Hall: 'Deviancy, Politics and the Media':CCCS Paper 11.
2.Ibid. P.28.
3.Stuart Hall et al: Policing the Crisis: op. cit. P.156.

research into their origins. However, on one level, they provide the symbolic 'glue' that holds the whole edifice together. To some 'Marxists', they may represent a hegemonic attempt to enforce 'control' ('ideology') but the suggestion of this chapter is that such an interpretation 'trivialises' the complexity of symbolic structures in contemporary British society. 'Key images' are one aspect, though crucial in their general effect, in the 'material/expressive' dialectic of 'culture' - a central feature of the basic cultural conditions to which 'material culture' provides a generational adaptation and 'expressive culture' a transitory and specific reaction. 'Material culture' may appropriate these 'key images' and re-work them in a more 'practical' form but they continue to retain a general but dynamic effect as a symbolic mechanism of control and integration.

'Material Culture'.

The previous section has suggested 'key images' as a complex, shifting feature in the cultural conditions on a societal level to which groups with a similar structural position must adapt. However, there are also material conditions (such as the political, educational, occupational and housing 'systems') which differentially affect sections of the population. It is suggested that the combination of these 'material' and 'cultural' conditions of existence in a complex industrial society (of the 'capitalist' type) results in a particular circumstance for particular groups to which they must adapt on an ongoing generational basis. This continuing adaptation to an enduring differential structural position is for convenience termed 'material culture'. The choice of terminology should not be confused with the common anthropological usage which refers to objects used or produced by a social group. At the risk of confusion, the term 'material' is used to describe this continuing adaptation because it relates to 'material' circumstance - the structural conditions of existence. However, although 'material culture' in my sense subsumes 'material' artefacts such as fashion, art, sport, food, drink, etc., it is by no means confined to these 'physical' aspects. Rather, it is a broad, symbolic adaptation on a continuing basis to a particular material/cultural circumstance. The physical manifestations of, for example, the working class council estate (the pubs, 'bookies', pawn shops, corner shop, etc.) are merely one aspect of the 'material' cultural adaptation.

Again 'material culture' is not 'structure' (e.g. the occupational structure, education system) but the continuing adaptation to these structures. For example, with regard to the working class 'material' adaptation, the elevation of the physical above the intellectual, the emphasis on the 'informal' as opposed to the 'formal'. In short, 'material culture' is the continuing and general response, in a creative sense, to a group's particular cultural and material circumstance. The important distinction between 'material' and 'expressive' cultural adaptations is that the former is pragmatic and continuing - how to be 'middle class' or 'working class', for example - while the latter is concerned with 'defusing' inconsistencies between, for example, 'key images' and the reality of existence or simply with creating meaning in a situation of monotony and deprivation.

In a sense, they serve a different purpose, with 'material cultures' tending to create diversity - a 'diversity' partially eased by the impact of 'key images' but with 'contradictions' and 'deprivations' necessarily continuing to arise in a system based on 'exploitation' and differential interest. It is here that 'expressive culture' comes into play with a range of symbolic options, in particular, 'meaning structures' and 'symbolic adaptations'. However, it is important to point out that there is an interchange not only between the 'material' and 'expressive' elements of culture but also between both and the material/cultural conditions underlying their development - to which they are a creative and dynamic adaptation.

Thus, for example, 'style', suggested as a symbolic adaptation to 'contradiction', e.g. the 'skinheads',[1] may become outmoded as an attempt to restore 'meaning' and then become appropriated as 'fashion', so entering the 'material' area of culture. Again, a symbolic adaptation, once original and useful, may become ritualised and pass into 'material culture'. Of course, this does not mean that it becomes 'redundant' and 'useless', merely that it passes from the original and temporary to the level of a continuing and general adaptation. For example, 'shop floor culture'[2] may originally have been an adaptation to the particular 'contradiction' in the work situation between the reality of monotony and the need for satisfaction in labour. Its success in alleviating the 'boredom' of much manual labour (through

1. J. Clarke: 'The Skinheads and the Study of Youth Culture': CCCS Paper 23.
2. P. Willis: Learning to Labour: op. cit.

joking, the appropriation of the work situation, etc.) has resulted in its transmission as a general adaptation, as a 'natural' element of the shop floor or the building site. In this respect, it can be seen as an element in 'material culture'.

However, 'cultural' elements can also in turn affect and pass into the contemporary material conditions. Thus, it is possible for 'contradictions' in the Education system (for example, between the 'key image' of equality of opportunity and the reality of non-achievement for many working-class children) to give rise to symbolic adaptations which in turn disrupt the smooth operation of the 'system' - 'counter-school culture'.[1] This 'conflict' gained the attention of those 'responsible for' the key institutions of society - the politicians. Indeed, the increasingly 'visible' (in a 'political' sense) failure of selective education - highlighted by the disruptive adaptations of some working class children - resulted in a change in the basic structure of education - the adoption of a 'comprehensive' system.

Again, the 'material' adaptation of labour to occupational 'exploitation' has led to the continual readjustment of the 'key images' governing the inherent conflict of interest between management and workers. Over a period of years, the effect of the search for more 'effective' industrial relations and the symbolic manoeuverings accompanying that search has been improved conditions for the work force, though, of course, manual labour is still far removed from non-manual labour in many respects.[2]

Such examples are limited but they serve to illustrate the complexity and especially the dynamic quality of the relationships between 'material' and 'expressive' culture both with each other and with underlying material/cultural conditions. The point that must be stressed is that 'material' and 'expressive' aspects of culture do not simply follow on from material/cultural circumstance. The relationship is far more intricate, with a 'material' or 'expressive' adaptation quite feasibly over time becoming part of, or affecting, the underlying material/cultural conditions.

Again, 'expressive' elements may emerge out of 'material culture', for example, in response to 'contradiction'. Thus, to quote again the

1. Ibid.
2. For example see: J. Westergaard & H. Resler: op. cit.

example of education, a 'key image' disseminated throughout society is that of education as being 'equally' available for all, dependent only on 'effort'. In the working class, this 'key image' contradicts the obvious 'fact' that this is not the case. Moreover, at a 'material' level, 'education' is devalued in favour of the 'physical' - labour is more 'manly' than 'book work'. 'Counter-school culture'[1] is the adaptive result - not merely a withdrawal of interest from education (a 'material' adaptation to structural inequality), but also a creative attempt to restore control over an area of living, an attempt to adapt to the reality of non-achievement and future manual labour.

The relationship then between material/cultural conditions and the 'material/expressive' elements of culture is complex, sometimes reciprocal, sometimes one-sided. It is in this respect that a diagrammatic representation tends to over-simplify 'reality'. However, having outlined the complexity of the issues involved and having emphasised the interrelationship between the different aspects of 'culture' and material circumstance, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the 'material' adaptation, in particular, to suggest more clearly the basis of differential circumstance.

'Material culture' then is the lived experience of material/cultural circumstance.- a continuing cultural adaptation to a particular set of conditions. For example, Parkin suggests the basis of a 'material' adaptation.[2]

> "(Working class communities)...generate a meaning system which is of purely parochial significance, representing a design for living based upon localised social knowledge and face-to-face relationships." (My emphasis)

Basically, in any society, of whatever complexity, human beings generate models of their own situation in order to orient themselves to it. It is this orientation, this process of adaptation to circumstance, which is called 'material culture' in terms of the model of 'culture' in a capitalist society that has been outlined. In short, 'material culture' is:[3] (though Ortner does not use my terminology)

> ".....the process of providing orientations within and to the particular natural, social and psychological realities of particular groups." (My emphasis)

1. P. Willis: Learning to Labour: op. cit.
2. Frank Parkin: Class Inequality and Political Order: op. cit. P.90.
3. S.B. Ortner: 'Gods' Bodies, Gods' Food': P.133 in R. Willis (Ed.): The Interpretation of Symbolism: Malaby Press: London 1975.

An example of the 'material' might be the 'working class' view of manual labour.(It must be remembered that manual labour has not disappeared as a result of the expansion in the non-manual area of work;[1] it remains a central concern for the majority of the working classes.) In this context, it is not surprising that the prevailing attitude to manual labour within the 'working class' (those with a shared complex of material/cultural conditions based on manual labour) should be to invert the 'image' of education as the 'key' to success.[2]

> "Manual labour is associated with the social superiority of masculinity and mental labour with the social inferiority of femininity."

Willis is also instrumental in suggesting other examples of the 'material' aspect of 'culture', as an adaptation to circumstance, though he does not do so in the general context of the 'material/expressive' dialectic. Briefly, he suggests that the location of the working class in the capitalist process and the necessity to adapt to this location results in what he calls 'subversive, or potentially subversive, forms.'[3]

> "The products of this independent ability of the working class - profane testing of the formal, sharp un-reified language, oppositional solidarity, and a humorous presence, style and value not based on formal job status - are no less the product of the capitalist era for their subversive, or potentially subversive, forms."

A contrary suggestion would be that Willis suffers from the 'Marxist' tendency to see 'class-in-itself' as <u>potentially</u> 'class-for-itself' - thus distorting the existent. This chapter, on the other hand, is interested only in what <u>is</u>, rather than what might, or should, be. In this context, his suggestion of the 'informal' as a central feature of working class life is useful as an example of 'material' adaptation to circumstance in a continuing sense. In other words, 'material culture' is not an 'expressive' adaptation aimed at 'defusing' or adjusting to 'contradiction', but simply an attempt to create an ongoing, <u>generational</u> adaptation to underlying constraint.

In this respect, the restricted scope of 'material culture' is perhaps based on man's need to 'reference' his personal situation, to make his 'reality' meaningful by comparison. Fernandez suggests the

1.See: J. Westergaard & H. Resler: <u>Class in a Capitalist Society</u>: op. cit.
2.P. Willis: <u>Learning to Labour</u>: op. cit. P.148.
3.Ibid. P.132.

importance of 'metaphoric cross-referencing' for creating a sense of integration, of 'wholeness', of being part of a larger unit, of 'society'. We all need to have a sense of location, of 'belonging', and one way of doing this is by comparing our situation with that of others.[1]

> "However men may analyse their experiences within any domain, they inevitably know and understand them best by referring them to other domains for elucidation. It is in that metaphoric cross-referencing of domains, perhaps, that culture is integrated, providing us with the sensation of wholeness."

But this need to 'reference' ourselves is accompanied by another 'need', namely, that of <u>meaningful</u> comparison. There is little point in a resident on a council estate 'fated' to a life of manual labour, comparing <u>his</u> life, <u>his</u> opportunities, to those of the stockbroker living in the suburbs who spends his days in the world of high finance and 'high' society - a certain recipe for 'revolution' or, at least, 'alienation'. For comparison to be meaningful, we must 'reference' ourselves to those in <u>similar</u> circumstances. Thus, the 'less privileged' tend to compare their situation only with those in a similar structural position. Moreover, there is a tendency to 'tailor their expectations' to those of their own job reference group. In a way, Parkin may be correct when he describes this as a 'protective strategy'.[2]

> "....it could be suggested that the inability of the less privileged to 'see' the more privileged is a protective strategy developed by those <u>already</u> resigned to a life of small rewards."

However, aside from suggesting this limited 'cross-referencing' as an essential 'stabilising' fact in a complex society, as an element in a 'material' adaptation, perhaps some light can be shed on the concept of 'material culture' as opposed to the 'expressive' by outlining certain of the major features of differential circumstance in Britain to-day. In this regard, the manual/non-manual division is used as the base for a description of differential material conditions. Of course, it is accepted that there is considerable differentiation <u>within</u> the broad categories of manual/non-manual. For example, one suggestion might be that the manual group could be sub-divided on the basis of skill levels. The non-manual group, on the other hand,

1.J.W. Fernandez: 'Persuasions and Performances': P.58 in C. Geertz (Ed.) <u>Myth, Symbol and Culture</u>: N.Y. W.W. Norton 1974.
2.F. Parkin: <u>Class Inequality & Political Order</u>: op. cit. P.62.

comprises a vast range from the routine non-manual worker to the 'professional' groups. This is not to forget the 'capitalists' themselves. However, at the obvious risk of caricature and over-simplification of the structure of contemporary British society, the manual/non-manual dichotomy does allow a clear illustration of the differential material conditions operating in society to which groups in a similar structural position must provide an ongoing adaptation. This does not, and is not intended to, deny the possibility of other divisions based on a more systematic analysis of differential circumstance. But, that is beyond the scope of this chapter - the immediate concern is to suggest differences, not of a temporary, but of a continuing nature to which groups with shared interests must adapt, that is, develop a 'material culture' as an ongoing generational adaptation.

An immediate and enduring feature that springs to mind is housing. On one level, indeed, housing is a factor in the physical separation of the working and middle classes. This point was abundantly illustrated in Chapter One where the dominance of council housing in certain areas was overwhelming. Though this is stretching the point a little far, one might call Barrackhill, Harrytown and Ferry Bank working class 'ghettos'. In a sense, they have been systematically constructed to house, not the middle or upper classes, but the 'workers'.[1]

> "But the strength of the tendency towards neighbourhood separation is undeniable....and is supported by the fact that greater job security characteristic of white-collar labour generally makes for a wider availability of house loans and mortgages."

Putting this in a more 'modern' perspective, the 'explosion' in house prices in the late 1970's must have made house purchase even more difficult for the working classes whose income is subject to different considerations than that of the white-collar worker. The significance of housing as an aspect of material circumstance affecting the individual's life-style is perhaps over-stressed, but usefully so as a means of making the point, by Rex and Moore.[2]

> "...we may say that there are five classes produced by this system of house-ownership and allocation:(1) the outright owner-occupiers;(2) the council house tenants;(3) the tenants of whole private houses;(4) the lodging house proprietors;(5) the tenants of lodging houses. Being a member

1.A. Giddens; Class Structure of the Advanced Societies; op. cit. P.184.
2.J. Rex & R. Moore; Race, Community & Conflict; A Study of Sparkbrook; 1967 Oxford University Press P.36.

> of one or other of these classes is of first importance in determining a man's associations, his interests, his life-style, and his position in the urban social structure."

Leaving aside the 'extremity' of this argument for a 'class struggle over the use of houses', the point is well made that housing is differentially available to different groups based to a large extent on occupation - the manual/non-manual divide. However, it is not the mere fact that occupation is manual or non-manual that has an effect on material circumstance but the whole complex of conditions that surround this basic dichotomy, in particular, the contrast in security and predictability of income.

Before outlining briefly the actual differences in occupational benefits between manual and non-manual jobs, it is useful to point out that, contrary to popular 'myth', manual labour is not disappearing with the increase in non-manual jobs - the majority of men remain manual workers.[1]

> "It is quite misleading to point...to the fact that nearly half the working population now are in non-manual jobs. For while a majority of working women have jobs that can be so described, over three in every five men are still manual workers." (My emphasis)

Bearing in mind this 'fact', there are certain important distinctions that must be made between the general conditions surrounding this type of occupation as compared to non-manual or 'white-collar' labour. In this comparison, the vexed question of those in routine white-collar tasks, resembling manual labour rather more than 'professional' work, is passed over as not fundamental to this broad discussion of continuing differential circumstance. Thus, the two main factors underlying manual work are 'insecurity' and 'unpredictability' which, taken together as a 'life-cycle', reveal a significant contrast between the two types of labour.[2]

> "This contrast - between the flat life cycle of workers, descending into or near poverty in old age, and the incremental and promotional curve which the bourgeois life cycle typically follows - underlines the insecurity of working class life." (My emphasis)

Another fundamental difference lies in the earnings potential of manual labour. Unlike non-manual workers, who tend to be paid on a salaried basis, 'only about two-thirds of the average male manual worker's pay is accounted for by his basic wage'.[3] In order to achieve

1.Westergaard & Resler: Class in a Capitalist Society: op. cit. P.291.
2.Ibid. P.95. 3.Ibid. P.94.

the full 'potential' of his earnings, the manual worker must work long hours. Thus, for example, the miner may earn a high wage, but the way he does so is fundamentally different to the white-collar worker's salaried performance.[1]

> "Working long hours is in fact almost the only way in which manual workers - and then still only a minority - can reach the high earnings which they are so often wrongly <u>assumed</u> to get as a matter of common experience."

A corollary of long hours is less time for leisure, family and so on. In fact, according to Westergaard and Resler, the whole idea of highly paid, underworked, manual workers is a modern 'myth'. The reverse might more correctly be said to be the case.[2]

> "Non-manual workers work fairly short hours...By contrast, manual workers work long hours....The notion that ordinary workers have much more leisure time at their everyday disposal than before the war <u>is a gross misconception</u>." (My emphasis)

However, it is not only the general conditions <u>of</u> employment that separate the manual from the non-manual, such as fringe benefits, pension schemes, and so on,[3] there are also differences in working conditions <u>on the job</u>. Thus, non-manual work tends to be cleaner, less arduous and more 'satisfying', while manual workers tend to endure a rather different and less favourable set of circumstances - and for <u>longer</u>.[4]

> "It requires little documentation to establish that manual workers as a group are exposed to worse noise levels, extremes of temperature, noxious smells and enjoy lower standards of amenities such as lavatories and canteens... Manual workers also spend much longer in these less favourable physical conditions."

Of course, these enduring differences of occupation and conditions at employment would be of little use as evidence of a <u>continuing</u> structural difference if it could be demonstrated that <u>mobility</u> is such that no particular group need necessarily be associated with a particular type of labour. In other words, if individual mobility were such that there was no need for any <u>adaptation</u> to material circumstance - the manual worker had as good a chance as anyone to move into the more 'comfortable' areas of non-manual work. Material circumstance did not have a generational base. However, although there is in fact a

1. Ibid. P.84. 2. Ibid. P.83.
3. Ibid. P.83/4
4. D. Wedderburn & C. Craig: 'Relative Deprivation in Work': P.147 in D. Wedderburn (Ed.) <u>Poverty, Inequality & Class Structure</u>: 1974 Cambridge University Press.

considerable amount of mobility quantitatively, qualitatively most moves upwards are modest.[1] The 'rags to riches' image is not a general reality.

> "Most individual mobility is far more modest; and much of it stays on one side or the other of the conventional dividing line between white and blue-collar work."

The 'modesty' of much mobility is further emphasised by the tendency towards the 'progressive proletarianization' of much low-grade white collar work.[2] Westergaard and Resler suggest that many of these jobs are becoming 'closer to manual wage-earning jobs than they were', tending to suffer the same 'objective criteria of market circumstances and work conditions'. Overall, this would suggest that many of those who do move upwards out of manual work do so into non-manual work that can hardly be described as qualitatively very different - the basic material circumstance of occupation does not significantly alter.

Again, without labouring this point of limited mobility too far, involvement in manual or non-manual labour does tend to follow family circumstance and background. In fact, the occupation of your parents plays a significant part in your own 'choice' of labour. This is not to deny, of course, the 'freedom' of the individual to choose, simply to observe that his 'choice' seems patterned rather than random.[3]

> "Manual workers probably have little chance of promotion out of their condition after the early years of their working lives. Even before that, their chances of promotion are much smaller if they are manual born - as most are - than if they have the advantages of a white collar background...." (My emphasis)

Of course, a well-known factor in this restriction of mobility is the operation of the education system - even the so-called 'progressive' comprehensive system. In fact, Westergaard and Resler suggest that it has become 'more important' as 'an avenue of social mobility' with the restriction of 'earlier channels of circulation'.[4] Whatever the actual case, there is little doubt of the general role of education in restricting entry to non-manual occupations and perpetuating (in a generational sense) manual occupation as a continuing feature

1. Westergaard & Resler: op. cit. P. 302.
2. Ibid. P.292.
3. Ibid. P.313.
4. Ibid. P.327.

of group circumstance.

On one level, it is often suggested that there is 'differential access' to the education system,[1] with certain 'key areas' or levels of education 'dominated' by a particular class. 'Public' and 'Independent' schools are, of course, the best examples of this restriction. On a more general level, the abandonment of 'selection' has to a large extent ended such highly 'visible' symbols of class-based restriction as the 11+, though there is little doubt that 'streaming' continues in many 'comprehensive' schools through ability 'sets' and other such devices.

However, this structural change in the education system has not meant a significant change, at least not to date, in the attitude of manual workers to 'learning' and 'education', illustrated earlier. It can be argued that the prevailing underlying conditions of manual work have resulted in an adaptation ('material culture') that is difficult to reconcile with current educational practice (arguably based on non-manual considerations). Indeed, the 'clash' of orientations often leads to withdrawal on the part of the working class child. This 'cultural' conflict is not difficult to relate to the contrasting circumstance of the manual/non-manual divide.[2]

> "...a contrast between a 'middle class' empathy with abstraction, a culturally habitual ease in generalising from particulars; and a working class rootedness in what is concrete, present, immediately and pragmatically relevant."

Thus, without going into a great deal of detail, the manual/non-manual divide can be used to develop a description of continuing, differential material conditions in contemporary British society. In housing, occupation, employment conditions, mobility, and education, at least, there seems to be a cluster of conditions directly related to the type of labour. Moreover, although these 'advantages' or 'disadvantages' are of course experienced individually, they are not based on a situation of individual mobility. Taken together, they combine to create a continuing set of differential material conditions for those born on either side of the divide.

These conditions then represent the material circumstance facing those engaged in manual (and non-manual) labour. Over time, and bearing in mind the limited opportunity to 'escape' from one's inherited

1.A. Giddens: Class Structure of Advanced Societies: op. cit. P.131.
2.Westergaard & Resler: op. cit. P.336.

position in any real, qualitative way, the result of interaction and adjustment is the continuing adaptation of 'material culture' - the 'lived' experience of material circumstance. However, this is not suggested as a simple, deterministic process but rather as a creative interchange between the individual, the group and constraint. 'Material culture' is itself symbolic and an adaptation like 'expressive' culture - the distinction lies in the purpose and duration of the adaptation. In the case of 'expressive culture', it is a symbolic attempt - of a temporary nature - to 'transcend' or 'defuse' contradiction or to restore 'meaning' to a depriving circumstance, to a situation of 'exploitation'. 'Material culture', on the other hand, is less innovative, intended to perpetuate the adaptations necessary to exist in a society based on a real, qualitative distinction between sections of the population (for example, the manual and the non-manual) in terms of life chances.

Perhaps two final short examples will further illustrate what I mean by a 'material' cultural adaptation. The first is the often-noted concept of 'differential morality', the second, the manipulation of language, which can on one level be 'material' and, on another, 'expressive'.

Briefly, 'public morality' is a 'key image' - a basic cultural condition - often seen by researchers in 'slum' or 'working class' areas to be 'irrelevant', 'ideological' and 'out of touch' with the practical concerns of the neighbourhood. The material circumstance in the working class 'community' is such that adaptation - a 'material' version of 'morality' - is necessary. But, this in no way should be taken to imply a rejection of 'societal values and norms'.[1]

> "This provincialism, however, is not total, nor does it constitute an unqualified rejection of societal values and norms. A belief in the stereotypes held by the wider society is what arouses so much distrust among the residents and drives them to find another basis for a moral order." (My emphasis)

However, whereas Suttles finds this evidence of the 'ideal status of public morality' and its 'undependability' when applied to 'real people',[2] thus missing the central point of parallel 'moralities', the one operating in everyday 'material' life, the other providing a reference point as societal 'guidelines' ('key images' - a cultural

1.G. Suttles: The Social Order of the Slum: 1968 Univ. of Chicago Press P.223.

2.Ibid. P.231.

condition), I would suggest that the empirical distinction thrown up by his work is another example of the 'material/expressive' dialectic - the error is to suggest that one excludes the other instead of suggesting the complexity of their interrelationship.

Again, in the case of language, on one level it can be seen as a response to the particular circumstances of manual labour. In this way, the constraints of the work-place (noise, etc.), the enforced concern with the present rather than with the unpredictable future, the elevation of the physical above the intellectual, have all conspired in a complex manner to create the 'material' adaptation of 'working class language' - suggested by Bernstein in his theoretical division of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes.[1] Whatever the merits of Bernstein's analysis, which has come under recent criticism for taking a 'technical adjustment' rather than a 'political' approach to language,[2] there is abundant evidence that there are differences in the structure of language based initially on the manual/non-manual dichotomy and complicated by other factors, such as regional situation (dialect) and residential differences as well as by ethnic origins, sex, and age/youth variations.[3]

However, language does not exist only as a 'material' adaptation to underlying material circumstance; it also has the 'expressive' capacity to 'transcend' the situation, to be creative. For example, in the hands of West Indian Youth it can be transformed into a symbolic manifestation - the 'rude boy'. On the other hand, the lads in Edinburgh and Dundee used language as a way of giving shape to the adaptation of 'ganging', of making it 'exciting' and 'meaningful' - it was the main resource for 'action', contradictory as this may seem (See Chapter 6).

Working class language then can be more than a 'material' adaptation to a particular set of depriving circumstances. It also has the potential, in a way difficult for the more 'stilted' middle class code, to create interest out of the symbolic resource of communication - it can operate on the 'expressive' level of culture as well as on the less innovative 'material' level. It is no accident that many successful

1. B. Bernstein: Class, Codes and Control: Paladin 1973.
2. For example see: Dave Morley: 'Reconceptualising the Media Audience': CCCS Paper 9.
3. Ibid.

comedians have 'working class' roots to their 'style'; their mannerisms, speech and general 'character' reflect this ability to create something out of nothing, to make a virtue out of necessity - to symbolically manipulate the existent. This then is the strength of working class (or 'manual') language in an 'expressive' sense in contrast to its 'material' base, where it facilitates communication in the surrounds of the factory, building site, or street corner.[1]

> "(Working class language)...does have its own strengths, in terms of which middle class language can be said to be lacking and does, as Bernstein himself points out, 'give access to a vast potential of meanings', which have not been explored by researchers." (My emphasis)

Expressive Culture.

To refer to the diagram (Figure 1), it was suggested that the complex interrelationship between material/cultural conditions and the adaptation of 'material culture' would necessarily throw up 'contradictions' between, for example, the 'key images' disseminated through the media and 'key institutions' (particularly the education system) and the reality of material circumstance (e.g. the 'inevitability' of a lifetime of manual labour for most working class children). Again, even in the absence of 'contradiction', the reality of, for example, shop floor monotony may require some response if creativity, purpose and meaning are to be maintained. In such circumstances, 'expressive culture', in the form either of 'meaning structures' or 'symbolic adaptations', intervenes to defuse tensions or ease deprivations. It was suggested earlier that 'key images' are employed in one sense as an integrative mechanism, not merely as an 'ideological' expression of domination used by those in control to force their will on the 'exploited'. However, it is obvious, bearing in mind the extent of differential circumstance suggested in the previous section, that the potential for 'contradiction' and 'conflict', even allowing for the 'unifying' influence of 'key images', is such that there is a need for some mechanism of symbolic 'adjustment' to tension.

With this in mind, the remaining areas of 'culture' to be introduced here can be described as 'meaning structures' and 'symbolic adaptations'. The former are perhaps the more difficult to define as they tend to merge with 'material culture' in a close relation with material conditions. Thus, for example, it has already been suggested

1. Ibid. P.7.

that 'shop floor culture' originally emerged in response to the conditions of the shop floor - the noise, the 'labour', the monotony, the lack of 'control'. However, it could be inferred that the sheer prevalence of this informal 'culture' of the shop floor indicates its passage from the area of 'expressive' to 'material' culture. In other words, it has become part of the general, continuing, 'material' response to the potentially 'alienating' conditions of manual labour.

Nevertheless, in spite of this 'material' appropriation of the 'expressive', 'shop floor culture' may initially have come into being as an attempt <u>to create meaning</u> in a situation that, potentially at least, threatened to deny creativity and individuality. In fact, it may be a basic human need to at least <u>feel</u> in 'control', to assert, albeit only symbolically, one's freedom. In this context, 'shop floor culture' may originally have been an attempt to 'overcome' the obvious 'deprivations' of manual labour.[1]

> "...the central thing about the working class culture of the shop floor is that, despite harsh conditions and external direction, people do look for meaning and impose frameworks...Paradoxically, they thread through the dead experience of work a living culture which is far from a simple reflex of defeat."

Indeed, bearing in mind that the only resource open to the worker is, in fact, 'self' and the presence of his partners in labour, it is hardly surprising that the adaptation that arose should centre around the <u>informal</u> - wit, repartee, comradeship etc.

'Meaning structures' are, of course, a form of symbolic adaptation insofar as they are a <u>symbolic</u> response to material/cultural conditions. However, it is useful to maintain the theoretical distinction between the two based on '<u>contradiction</u>'. Thus, 'meaning structures' essentially revolve around 'interest' and 'diversion' from a potentially, if not actually, depriving situation, whereas 'symbolic adaptations' may more correctly be regarded as a response to 'contradiction' <u>between</u> 'reality' (the existent) <u>and</u> what should be (according to prevailing 'key images' etc.). 'Meaning structures' then create 'meaning' in a reality of monotony and exploitation, whereas 'symbolic adaptations', at least potentially, 'defuse' or 'transcend' inconsistencies/contradictions.

Thus, 'counter-school culture', as described by Paul Willis, may be regarded as a 'symbolic adaptation', as a response to the

1. P. Willis: <u>Learning to Labour</u>: op. cit. P.52.

'contradiction' between the prevailing 'key image' of 'education' as 'equally available to all, based only on potential', and the 'reality' of education as affected not only by 'material culture', but also by the sobering truth of manual labour at the end of the educational experience. Willis points out that without the existence of 'counter-school culture' - the rejection of the formal demands of the school in favour of the informal demands of the group, ultimately of more 'practical' benefit on the shop floor - the probability of real 'alienation' from the 'system' would be much higher.[1] After all, if we all really did think that there was equality of opportunity, and a 'good' job was the just reward for effort, the majority of us could expect a massive disappointment when we confronted the reality of manual labour. Discontent and frustration would be the mildest results of this unswerving acceptance of 'equal opportunity'. There is then a real 'contradiction' created by the 'keynimage' of education, as applied to manual prospects, that must be 'resolved'. Willis suggests that this 'resolution' is symbolic and in the direction of the informal. Ironically, 'counter-school culture' will benefit the lads on the shop floor far more than will the exhortations of their teachers to 'try harder'.[2]

> "The informal group is the basis of this (counter-school) culture, the fundamental and elemental source of its resistance. It locates and makes possible all other elements of the culture and its presence clearly distinguishes the 'lads' from the 'ear-oles'."

Other examples of 'symbolic adaptations' are suggested by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the discussion of 'style' with regard to 'Teds', 'Mods' and 'Skinheads',[3] an issue taken up in Chapter 6 and so not discussed in any great detail here except to illustrate the adaptive role of 'expressive culture' with a final example - Willis's 'motor bike boys'.[4]

The point of this adaptation is that, although the 'motor bike boys' appear 'threatening' to the general public, a closer analysis of their behaviour reveals its largely symbolic base. They were not actually offering any kind of challenge to the existent, merely elaborating an adaptation that was at most superficial and verbal rather

1. Ibid. 2. Ibid. P.23.
3. For example see: Stenc. Occ. Papers: CCCS Nos. 18,20,22,23,42. (Titles in the Bibliography)
4. P. Willis: Profane Culture: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978.

than active and physical.[1]

> "There was also a general kind of lawlessness, a propensity to fight and steal that was anathema to conventional society. The point is that for all this they did not challenge the main structures of society.....
> They certainly tried to outrage but their offence was basically at a surface level; it was cheek, shock, surprise, disgust, insubordination, insult - never a basic political challenge to institutions and belief." (My emphasis)

'Symbolic adaptations' then, including 'meaning structures', are an essential element in the 'material/expressive' dialectic, as a factor both in the creation of meaning and the resolution, albeit symbolic, of 'contradiction'. Indeed, a point of central importance is that the suggestions made in this discussion of 'culture' cannot be isolated as 'concepts' but form part of a theoretical framework that offers an 'alternative' view of the organisation of contemporary capitalist society. They suggest, albeit in an exploratory manner, a framework of 'cultural' appropriation of, and adaptation to, material/cultural circumstance that allows for the empirical discovery of a co-existent unity and diversity in British society.

However, having elaborated in some detail the framework to be used in the analysis of 'ganging' and justifying this 'departure' on the grounds both of an empirical finding of 'consensus' and 'integration' parallelling 'deviancy' and the inadequacy of existing theoretical approaches to 'culture' which tend to 'trivialise' the symbolic, it is now necessary to sketch an empirical outline of the phenomenon of 'ganging' based on scepticism as to its foundation in action. An attempt will be made to demonstrate a symbolic rather than an action structure. This static description of 'ganging' will be followed by an attempt to illustrate the 'gang' as symbolic action and the whole empirical exercise will then be related to the preceding view of 'culture' in a discussion of the 'meaning' of 'ganging', of 'ganging' as a symbolic adaptation to a particular material/cultural set of conditions. To this end, 'territory', 'membership', 'ritual aggression' and other aspects of 'ganging' will be discussed as a symbolic reaction to a material/cultural context potentially damaging to 'identity', both on the level of the individual and the group.

1. Ibid. P.49.

CHAPTER FOUR.

THE 'GANG' - A SCEPTICAL VIEW.

Introduction.

To date, the priority has been the empirical and theoretical discovery of the need for a 'cultural' analysis, followed by an attempt to develop a view of 'culture' based on symbol which allows for the real complexity of human behaviour. While it is not suggested that this discussion has been definitive and the concepts of 'material' and 'expressive' culture as outlined will certainly require further clarification and amendment in the field, it is intended to elaborate a view of 'ganging' in terms of the 'material/expressive' dialectic, of 'ganging' as a symbolic adaptation. To this end, this chapter will attempt to approach the phenomenon with a 'sceptical' view in order to demonstrate that, contrary to the opinion of the boys (and the media), the 'gangs' that existed at the time of research were not primarily 'action' structures - those incidents that took place tended to be random and noisy rather than systematic and deadly. However, it is not suggested that empirical discovery in Edinburgh and Dundee between 1971 and 1973 necessarily undermines the concept of 'ganging' in general.[1] Other field workers may indeed have studied a different, more 'structured' phenomenon, based on a different material circumstance, with different contradictions requiring 'resolution', different priorities to be met.

Nevertheless, throughout the following chapter, it will be tentatively suggested that evidence of a similar flexible and diffuse structure (symbolic?) can be found in the research of other field workers. Thus, it is not the intention to totally isolate the present work; it may be that a greater emphasis on the symbolic by earlier writers might have eliminated the inconsistencies between their theoretical findings (of 'structure', 'organisation' and 'action') and their empirical 'reality' (of failure to conform to 'gang norms', ritual rather than actual aggression, a 'structure' that 'disappears' when examined too closely). This suggestion of parallel findings in allied work should not, however, be over-stressed - such tentative observations are made

1. See for example, more 'structured' views in:
   James Patrick: A Glasgow Gang Observed: 1973 Eyre Methuen.
   L. Yablonsky: The Violent Gang: 1962 Macmillan & Co.
   F.M. Thrasher: The Gang: 1926 Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

without full knowledge of the particular material conditions underlying the earlier research. However, they do add to the air of scepticism that is the main priority of this chapter.

The need for this approach can perhaps be illustrated by reference to one or two 'gang incidents' and the contradictory and confused statements of 'gang members' as to the nature of the phenomenon. For example, John Clancy had been charged in connection with a 'riotous mob' that had ostensibly involved the 'Jungle' and the 'YBT' having a 'battle'. However, he was unclear as to exactly why he was involved, although he was sure that the 'Jungle' were there.

> "Och, I dinnae ken what happened. Sure I got lifted, but I was jest havin' a wee bit o' fun. Aye, the Jungle was there, but I dinnae ken wha' they are."

Another incident involving the 'Jungle' was equally difficult to analyse in terms of 'structure', but it is typical of the kind of situational involvement that characterises many 'gang fights'. Johnny of the 'YBT' relates the story.

> "The other night a few boys were wanderin' doon Princes Street, shoutin' 'Jungle' at everybady. They seen two boys walkin' doon the other side o' the street an' yelled..... at them. The other boys jest gave them the V-sign an' the Jungle charged across the road to jump them. But the two boys pulled oot a blade an' the Jungle nearly shit themselves an' ran away."

Phil, who worked as a 'bouncer' in a hotel, was quite sure that there were 'gangs' and that they were a great 'problem', but his treatment of two 'gangs' reveals his inconsistent approach. First, the 'Jungle' are treated with caution as a way of avoiding retribution from the whole 'team', but then the 'Mental Drylaw' are 'beaten up' and thrown out in spite of the stated possibility of their getting reinforcements and coming back.

> "Every Friday, the Jungle come intae the Centre Bar an' at closing time they shout, 'We are the Mental Jungle', an' challenge us tae throw them oot, but it's tae risky, they all kerry blades an' they're mad..... Sometimes, I think o' gettin' all the boys fra' the old YBT together, but there's nae point - they'd jest come back the week after an' bring their whole fuckin' team."

<u>And, in sharp contrast:</u>

> "These boys in the Bar were shoutin', 'Mental Drylaw', an' threatenin' tae beat up a lassie. So me an' my brothers grabbed them an' threw them thru' a glass door - they didnae come back. (Laugh)"

Such inconsistencies make it difficult to accept totally the interpretation of many incidents in 'gang' terms. Often the term 'gang fight' appeared to be used as a convenient means of describing a decidedly unstructured and 'messy' incident - a 'neat' label.

A similar problem was encountered with 'gang names', where the researcher was met with a list that changed constantly according to the informant, although there was a core of names that seemed to be generally accepted - for example, the 'YBT', 'Jungle', 'Terror' and 'Bar-Ox' in Edinburgh, and the 'Huns', 'Toddy' and 'Fleet' in Dundee. There was therefore a need for scepticism, as suggested by Boston.[1]

> "Nor does the fact that the name of a gang is written on a bus shelter mean that there is such a gang: as with 'Home Rule for Scotland' graffiti, it may rather express a wish than describe something that exists. In the Gorbals, for example, the only gangs were the Tiny Cumbie and the Young Cumbie, although the names of Toddler and YY (Young Young) groups were also written on the walls." (My emphasis)

In fact, the practice of spraying on walls seemed to bear more relation to the number of walls available than to the existence of any such 'gangs'. Closer observation in this study revealed that there seemed to be two main groups of names: the first, mainly the result of some individual's imagination, the second, conforming to certain large housing estates. Thus a boy might dream up imaginary groups, such as the 'Suicide Squad', or the 'Grovers', which found life only through an aerosol paint spray. On the other hand, certain names, such as the 'YBT', seemed to have a life beyond the teenage years of individual 'members' and were a 'tradition' in the area. Boston noticed this in Glasgow.[2]

> "The teenage gangs that have emerged (or re-emerged) in Glasgow in the past four or five years are mainly in the new housing estates that almost completely surround the city.....
> Estimates of the number in a gang vary wildly. One social worker told me that to be in a district is to be a member of a gang and this may be true....." (My emphasis)

The boys themselves often gave the impression that these traditional 'gang names' were a youthful version of the estate name - Harrytown/'YBT', Barrackhill/'Terror', Oxgangs/'Bar-Ox', Jute Hill/'Huns', and so on. For example, Terry was asked:

1.R. Boston: 'The Glasgow Gangs': New Society: 1/8/68 P.149.
2.Ibid. P.149.

"(Writer) 'Has the 'Toddy' a leader; how do you join?'....
(Terry) 'Nae leaders - ye're in if ye live in Douglas'."

Two girls at the Coffee Bar, who knew all the boys very well, were asked a similar question. Their reaction was one of confusion, but the conclusion was the same.

"(Writer)....'Who are the Huns?'...
This stumped them for a while; they started discussing several names but could not agree. To break the stalemate, I pointed to a group of boys wandering down the road.
'Are they in the Huns?'.....
They answered 'yes', so I asked:
'What about all the other boys in Jute Hill?'.....
After thinking for a moment, they answered:
'Everybody in Jute Hill belongs tae the Huns'."

Jimmy confirmed this view of neighbourhood affiliation, but in a different way; he pointed out quite astutely that there are 'pressures' to 'play' and go out together - to become part of the 'neighbourhood.'

"We all grow up together, ken, ye've got tae gae oot, right, if ye stay in, ye're stupid, a crapper, an' I'm nae crapper - so ye get intae trouble, oot wi' the boys."

Since the 'neighbourhood' equates with the 'gang', technically you are a 'member' if you live in the area. In fact, different peer groups may become different versions of the dominant 'gang', operating at the same time. For example, two boys both said they 'ran aroond wi' the YBT', but denied knowing that the other was 'involved'. I remarked:

"It is interesting that he (Maxie) says that he ran around with the YBT, but that he has never mixed with Danny, Adrian and friends who are exactly the same age and say the same thing. What's more, Maxie says that Danny is a 'punk'."

Thus, while there was evidence of estates having a particular 'gang name', a name which did not necessarily imply a cohesive structure, further probing revealed many 'contradictions'. As implied above, there was great difficulty in assessing an informant's, or any other person's, 'membership'. For example, Johnny claimed to be in the 'YBT' and in fact had been assaulted by other groups, but his brother was rather cynical about the whole issue.

"Johnny's got a big mooth. He's the kind that gaes doon the street shouting, 'YBT', an' then gettin' jumped."

Gerry, on the other hand, quite openly boasted (but in a rather contradictory manner):

"Ah'm a regular member, at least as far as battles go."

But after observation of his friends, I had to admit:

"This group's involvement with the 'YBT' is not clear."

In fact, the phrase that boys used most frequently to describe their relationship to a group was, 'I run aboot wi'; the significance of this seems to be that even the boys were unclear as to their 'membership' and their involvement and suggested instead that they were on the 'outside' but linked in a diffuse way - by 'neighbourhood' ties.

In Dundee, 'membership' was theoretically signified by a 'uniform', according to the local Press and informants, but little evidence, if any, was found to support this suggestion, illustrated below in a statement from a 'gang member'.

> "See the 'Shams', they ha' their ain jersey. If I gae tae Fintry, I wear that jersey tae avoid bein' jumped. Ferry Bank has its ain jersey tae; if I gae tae Ferry Bank, I wear their jersey."

The attempt to identify 'gang territory' lends further support to the neighbourhood base of 'gangs'; the diffuse involvement of the teenage population, rather than a small, structured group. Thus, two informants, one from Oxgangs, the other from Harrytown, were remarkably consistent on the pattern of entertainment on Saturday night.

> "Mike ('Bar-Ox'): 'The boys gae oot tae Anderson's an' then tae the Cav.'
> Writer: 'Together or separately'.
> Mike: 'Wi' their ain mates.....'
> Gerry ('YBT'): 'We gae tae the Festival Tavern first, then up tae the Cav.'
> Writer: 'Together or on your own'.
> Gerry: 'I gae wi' Maxie; we all end up at the Cav.'"

But, although all the boys end the night at the same dance hall and incidents occur at this final rendezvous between three main groups, the 'Jungle', 'YBT', and 'Bar-Ox', the pattern conforms to a 'neighbourhood', rather than a 'gang' basis. In other words, the boys go out with their personal friends in a set of diverse groups, varying in size. However, the restricted pattern of 'entertainment' leads boys from the same neighbourhood to use the same facilities. Thus, if there is conflict, it tends to escalate and become 'structured' under the various territorial banners, e.g. the 'YBT' from Harrytown, the 'Terror' from Barrackhill - the loose associational ties between peer groups become 'mobilised' in conflict.

This involvement of the 'ordinary' adolescent, rather than a 'disturbed' fringe, is illustrated by the finding that the Community

Centres provided by the Corporation were themselves regarded as the province of the local 'gang'. For example, Dennis told me that:

> "The 'YBT' often gae up tae the Community Centre fer somethin' tae dae. All the boys gae there."

Mike, from Oxgangs, was quite sure that most 'trouble' involved the boys from the Community Centre.

> "A lot of aggro sterts when the boys ('Bar-Ox') come oot o' the Centre at the end o' the night."

In Douglas in Dundee, the local policeman thought that the Community Centre was a den of 'iniquity' because:

> "All the hard nuts and gang members come here tae get off the streets because they ken that we'll move them on."

The 'gang member' thus appears as a 'member' of a loose federation of peer groups located within a neighbourhood. His involvement is vague, unspecified and largely situational. In short, the only agreed 'fact' is the existence of some kind of 'neighbourhood' structure under a 'gang' name, such as the 'Huns'.

Within this vestige of unity, smaller groups may put themselves forward as subdivisions based on a smaller 'area' - their <u>immediate</u> neighbourhood. Thus, Jamie told me about the different groups that 'hang aboot at the flats'.

> "Me an' my mates are the 'Skerry YBT', an' Davie an' his boys call themselves the 'Grovers', but we all hang aboot together. Up the road in Saughton, there's a gang called the 'Saughton Boot Boys'."

Other boys tended to ally themselves with a particular area, although they lived in another district. Thus, Billy came from Gilmerton, but he claimed to 'run aroond wi' the Terror', not the 'Young Gillie'. In fact, closer inspection revealed that his immediate friends came from Barrackhill and he was not at all sure of their real involvement with any 'gang'.

> "When we get intae a battle, we shout, 'Terror, ya bas'.... (Why?).....I'm no sure why.....because the boys come fra' Barrackhill. We're all Terror, ken."

On the other hand, there <u>were</u> boys who held a structured view of the 'gang' and who saw the city as drawn up into battle zones. Thus, Tony was very specific on the duties and obligations of a 'gang member' and the 'territories' of the various 'gangs'.

> "The Jungle is boys fra' Clermiston, Gorgi, Sighthill an' Longstane. When there's goin' tae be a battle, they join together. When word gaes oot that there's gain' tae be a

> battle at such and such a spot, if ye dinna' gae, ye're a crapper. In the Jungle, we used tae all get on one bus an' gae off together an' get in some bother."

But, this same boy went to the 'Cav' with eight of his friends and 'got the heid stuck on him'. In fact, he went outside for 'a square go' with his attacker and was beaten up by four boys without any sign of support from the 'Jungle'. However, this did not deter him from telling me the next day in sensational terms his 'discovery' of a new 'gang' that had appeared at Easter Road Footbal Ground in some kind of 'uniform'.

> "There's a gang o' boys who gae tae Easter Road tae cause trouble. They carry umbrellas an' wear soft hats wi' a scarf tied roond them. Last week, they were shoutin',
> 'We're no mental, we're insane',
> an' they had part o' the crowd pinned up against a wall an' they were jabbin' them wi' their brollies."

Similarly, in Dundee, the self-styled 'leaders' of the 'Tongs' showed the difficulties the boys faced in verbalising a structure that did not really exist in action.

> "(Writer): 'O.K. Who's the leader of the Ferry Bank Huns?'
> 'Terry', said 'Rogey'. 'No, Andy', said Roddy. After a discussion, 'Rogey' got his way.....
> (Writer):'How do you join the Huns?'.....
> (Jim):'You join them thru' a friend or ye jest stert runnin' aroond wi' them'.....
> (Writer): 'Who's in the Huns?'.....
> An hour later, I had to go, but they were still arguing."

These contradictions and confusions are suggested merely as a means of planting the seed of scepticism in the reader's mind before embarking on a more detailed study of specific aspects of the 'gangs' found in Edinburgh and Dundee. However, these doubts as to 'structure' have been noted by other writers and varied conclusions drawn. For example, Yablonsky:[1]

> "To-day's violent gang is characterised by flux. It lacks the features of an organised group."

H.J. Parker, on the other hand, avoids 'gang' terminology altogether, in spite of local assertions of a 'gang' structure.[2]

> "Although referred to locally as a 'little gang', the Ritz are merely a peer group of friends who have grown up together and spend much of their free time together."

In fact, he is adamant that the 'Boys' are not a 'gang', concentrating instead on the less emotive term, 'network'.[3]

1.L. Yablonsky: op. cit. P.25
2.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.55.
3.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.64.

> "The Boys are not a gang....they are a network, a loose-knit social group. A gang is often identifiable to outsiders as such, a network is not."

Of course, Parker's main concern was not the 'gang' phenomenon and his failure to draw the contrast clearly is perhaps excusable. However, James Patrick made the study of 'Glasgow Gangs' his focus and it is significant that, although he also avoids the implications of an empirically diffuse structure, many of his conclusions are consistent with the phenomenon as it exists in Edinburgh and Dundee. This 'vacillation' lends a certain air of inconsistency to his findings, perhaps because he approached the field with a preconception of 'pathology', which 'pushed' him in the direction of a 'structural' interpretation.

For example, he suggests a clearly-structured view of the 'gang' and its 'leaders', while at the same time implying the concept of the 'gang' as a 'neighbourhood' unit with a diffuse affiliation.[1]

> "The leaders of all the major gangs throughout the city.... were well-known.....
> Gangs appeared to me to be based on territory. Boys belonged to the Valley, for example, <u>because they lived in that area</u>."
> (My emphasis)

Likewise, his findings on membership reveal <u>anything but</u> a cohesive structure, but he is unable to take the 'radical' step of suggesting that perhaps there is <u>no</u> structure, at least in the sense of an organised 'gang'.[2]

> "Another major inference I drew at this time was the casual attitude towards gang membership. I had gained admission, if not acceptance, rather easily. No initiation test or ceremony was demanded of me.....Tim and Fergie had the year before simply announced that they were leaving the gang and that had been accepted."

Certainly, the fact that the boys present when he was in the field were always different might have merited a stronger conclusion than the following.[3]

> "Consequently, the list of boys present on the occasions I met the gang were never the same.....The total numerical strength of the Young Team was therefore subject to constant fluctuation."

Patrick even discovered the significance of 'fantasy' for the boys but then dismisses it as yet another example of their 'pathological'

1.James Patrick: op. cit. P.36.
2.Ibid. P.97.
3.Ibid. P.97.

obsessions. His 'gang member' has no rationality, no purpose - he is 'ineffectual'.[1]

> "(The Young Team) appear as a loose grouping of socially ineffectual youths, whose gang is 'more a vehicle for its members' fantasies and desires for status than'....a well-integrated fighting machine."

But, perhaps most disturbing is the continual 'passing over' of useful empirical findings, while overtly suggesting that the research is an attempt to describe 'reality'. This is epitomised in his discussion of the 'norms of the Young Team', which include 'no grassing', 'square-goes' within the 'gang', the compulsion to participate in violence, and the avoidance of fighting with girls. He finds that these 'norms' are ignored to an amazing degree, but fails to assert their 'mythical' nature as part of a symbolic adaptation <u>created</u> by 'normal' adolescents in pursuit of leisure-time fulfilment 'on the streets'.[2]

> "The behaviour of the boys, <u>especially of the leaders</u>, negated each and every one of the principles by which they claimed to live their lives.....The more significant the activity, the more frequent were the breaches of the norm; and far from the latitude of the leader being narrowest in such a situation, he acted contrary to the norms more often than anyone else." (My emphasis)

On the other hand, the purpose of this chapter is to use such findings in an attempt to give the phenomenon 'real' meaning. Thus, great pains have been taken to develop the view of the 'gang member' as a working class adolescent who is one of 'us', an 'integrated' member of British society, although with special constraints. Only this view can allow a discussion of aspects of 'gang culture' without resorting to 'pathology'. The phenomenon of 'ganging' then becomes comprehensible as a symbolic adaptation that appears to have gained a firm foothold in several Scottish cities, including Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow.

Some space has been devoted to superficially sketching some of the contradictions and confusions which abound both in the 'participants' and some field workers' observations. This was intended to suggest the 'symbolic' rather than action basis of much 'gang' activity and to pave the way for the more detailed descriptions which now follow of some of the main areas of 'gang' activity, again as suggested by informants <u>and</u> previous studies. Briefly, it is hoped to develop a sceptical view of

1. Ibid. P.194
2. Ibid. P.187/8.

the 'gang' both as a static and as a dynamic structure and to relate this empirical finding to the view of 'culture' developed earlier.

Leadership.

'Leadership' is one of the central elements of 'ganging' and much attention has been devoted to this subject by field workers, with rather confusing results. For example, in some research, 'leaders' are described who seem to 'lead' nothing except their 'fantasies' - they spend all their time organising 'gangs' and 'enlisting members'.[1]

> "Loco and his boys seemed to get their kicks from this enlistment process.....the leaders had strong needs to organise gangs because it apparently gave them prestige."

Yablonsky also discovered the paradox of 'leaders' who are difficult to trace, let alone relate to the 'gang' being studied.[2]

> "Duke and Pedro were listed as leaders....(but) in addition there were several names of leaders I had never heard before."

Boston was also aware of this phenomenon of fluctuating 'leadership', although he leaves the reader to reflect on this paradox.[3]

> "Before Frankie Vaughan appeared on the scene, apparently the boys in the gangs said they had no leaders. Yet Frankie Vaughan has met four leaders. Does this mean that he has not met leaders, or that there are new leaders where there were none before?"

Patrick, inevitably, was quite clear on the leadership structure in Glasgow, readily accepting the opinions of his informants, and directly contradicting Boston.[4]

> "In Glasgow, there was little differentiation in the horizontal structure of the gang. Young Teams, Tiny and Toddler Teams were led by a 'leader-aff', Heavy Teams by a 'King'... Apart from the leadership role, there were indefinite followers or membership roles filled by the 'punters'."

Having established this basic 'structure', he proceeds to allocate these 'leadership' roles to the 'most disturbed boys.[5] If there is a 'gang', there must be 'leaders', and these 'leaders' must be those boys who say they are 'leaders'. He does not really discuss the nature of the 'leadership' provided and, possibly, its tentative existence. Do they lead anything?

> "In the Young Team, it was not the strongest or the tallest or the most intelligent boys who became leaders, but the

1. L. Yablonsky: op. cit. PP.102/3.
2. Ibid. P.124
3. R. Boston: op. cit. P.151.
4. James Patrick: op. cit. P.183.
5. Ibid. P.178.

> most disturbed, the most violent boys, those with lowest impulse control."

In Edinburgh and Dundee, on the other hand, it proved almost impossible to get any agreement on the 'leadership' of a particular group. Since it has already been suggested that the principal 'gang' names are really district names, a local 'standard', this is hardly surprising. In fact, a common reaction to questions on 'leadership' was, 'There's nae leader, we're all the same'. Moreover, a 'leader' suggested by one peer group was almost always derided by another.

In fact, the boys often denied the whole concept of 'leadership'. Danny, who lived in Barrackhill, was particularly voluble on the subject of 'Zingo', who claimed to be 'leader' of the 'Terror'.

> "Zingo's a fuckin' heidcase; he thinks the Terror's the fuckin' I.R.A. wi' guns an' bombs. He's nae right in the head, I'm tellin' ye."

However, there were occasions when a name did appear to emerge with some consistency. The most notable case was that of Joe who, it was claimed, was the 'leader' of the 'YBT'. Certainly, it became clear that he did tend to 'hang aboot' with quite a large group of boys on a regular basis. But, when asked by an informant if he was the 'leader', he denied it emphatically.

> "I asked Joe (an informant speaking) and he said that he jest used tae knock aboot wi' a crowd o' boys. If he got intae a battle, they'd back him. People jest said that Joe was the leader because, whereever he was, there was a crowd o' boys."

Of course, a limited view of leadership could be taken as, for example, the initiator of 'action', of a 'gang' incident, but even this limited definition proved very difficult to establish in the field in terms of names. Jackie described an incident where the organiser of the 'battle' failed to turn up.

> "Johnny Bennett telt us o' a battle against the Jungle in Gorgi, but he didnae turn up on the night an' we were battered."

Even in Dundee, the issue of leadership was by no means clear, although the groups using the Coffee Bar were much smaller and therefore, at least potentially, more tightly organised. Some of the disputes as to the 'leadership' of the 'Huns' have already been described, but many hours were spent by the boys debating 'leadership', 'membership', and other questions of 'structure', without ever arriving at a satisfactory conclusion.

The Ferry Bank 'Tongs' had a clear 'leadership' (at least verbally), with 'Rogey' and 'Roby' sharing the 'honours', but in practice their presence and organising ability were inconsistent. The 'rank-and-file' of the 'gang' usually drifted around, while their 'leaders' either were not present or concentrated on private conversation. Those incidents that did occur, usually did so spontaneously with little, if any, direction from the 'leaders', although it was noticeable that they tended to be the most violent and were usually ready to 'jump in'.

However, the overall impression was not of tight leadership, but rather of the absence of any identifiable, generally-accepted 'leaders'. This is consistent with the suggestion that 'gangs' are not tightly-structured 'units', but diffuse structures wielding a symbolic organisation. The teenage population of an area is drawn together in a loose relationship where one's immediate peer group is more significant for action than any organised 'gang'. The 'neighbourhood' slogan is shouted and 'leaders' emerge in a purely situational context - the 'gang' exists only for as long as the incident.

'Hardness' and 'Madness'.

Closely linked with the concepts of leadership and prestige in the 'gang' is the ideal of 'being able to take care of yourself', or 'hardness'-being a 'hard man'. This concern has often been noted by researchers into the values of lower-class adolescents and it seems reasonable that the 'gang', with its alleged emphasis on violence, should make this a 'priority'. Indeed, Boston sees the ideal of the 'hard man' as a general problem in Glasgow, among adults and adolescents alike.[1]

> "...from the poverty and unemployment of the 19th. Century and the first part of this century has emerged the idea of the 'hard man', a tough, fighting, drinking man who is respected and admired. Glasgow admires aggressiveness and when adult law-abiding society generally puts such high value on these qualities, it is hardly surprising that young people get drunk and stick knives in each other."

In 'Roundhouse' too, the boys had a similar view; you have to be able to 'stand up for yourself', to ' act like a man'.[2] Moreover, Parker suggests that this very attitude can precipitate confrontation.

> "A whole ethos of being 'hard', being able to look after yourself like a man, is displayed by the boys and other working class adolescents. Language is an important carrier of this identity....used in conversation with outsiders,

1.R. Boston: op. cit. P.151 2.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.146/7.

> heavy language can suggest toughness....This concern with toughness and trouble necessitates an alertness to potentially inflammatory situations."

Certainly, the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee did show a great preoccupation with appearing 'hard', with not being a 'crapper'. This did not mean an obsession with <u>aggressive</u> toughness but, ideally, the ability to defend oneself if provoked or attacked. For example, Andy was trying to impress a female student at the Coffee Bar with his 'toughness'.

> "I went tae Saughton (Prison); ye wouldnae last two minutes in there; ye've got tae be tough tae survive....If ah felt like it, ah could get a team up here an' smash the place up. This lot wouldna' stand a chance."

Like Andy, many of the informants spent a great deal of time trying to convince others of their 'hardness'. Pat was quite dramatic in his description of what would happen to me if I insulted him.

> "If ye came up tae me in the street an' telt me I was soft as shit, I'd break yer fuckin' nose."

He often boasted of how he had had a 'battle' with three men and come off best, although another of his stories, far from implying 'hardness', seemed to suggest uncalled-for aggression.

> "I was in the bevy (Pub) wi' four mates an' the barmaid sterted gettin' stroppy because we werena' drinkin' up fast enough. We were lippy back an' she tried tae batter us wi' a brush so we took it off her an' brake it. The Barman tried tae jump in so we sorted him oot tae."

Gerry shed some light on this concept of 'hardness' when he described his 'ideal man', someone he had just met in Glasgow. Especially significant is the link between loyalty and 'hardness'.

> "He's only wee but he can really handle hissel'. He never turns on his mates. He's the sort o' boy that, if ye ken him, he's alright. If ye dinna', then watch oot. I seen him beat up two 'Paddies' once (Irishmen) - magic."

However, as with all such ideals, there were many contradictions in practice, although of the several aspects of 'gang culture', the boys tended to remain most faithful to this one. Of course, this was probably because, as has often been pointed out, the lower-class adolescent is already 'committed' to 'toughness' as a local priority.

The greatest difficulty seemed to be the tendency for 'hardness' to merge in practice with 'madness', which was condemned as unreasonable behaviour. Patrick illustrates the ideal distinction in his description of a 'gemme boay' and a 'mental heid'. However, his view of the former would be regarded by many of my subjects as 'madness'.

> "This is the mark of the 'gemme boay', someone who is ready to fight, whatever the odds, even if defeat or physical punishment is inevitable.....
> He's a mental heid. A right heid-banger....He's mad. Tried tae set the polis station oan fire wi petrol bombs."[1]

This distinction between 'hardness' and 'madness' is given support by Peter Marsh in his description of the contrast between the 'Hardcase' and the 'Nutter'. Certainly, the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee would have been in sympathy with the line he draws between normal courage and 'irrational' stupidity.[2]

> "A Hardcase or Aggro Leader - commands the greatest respect of all within the Rowdies group.....His reputation hangs on the belief that if real fighting...were ever to be called for, he would be man enough to do it. Being hard is about being manly.....the Hardcase must convincingly demonstrate his masculinity through acts of courage and fearlessness. His lack of fear, however, must not be abnormally great. Total fearlessness - the issuing of challenges against impossible odds - is the prerogative of the Nutter."

But, nevertheless, in spite of the 'public' disdain of the 'madman', there is a covert admiration for his exploits. This is probably because, in practice, the 'hard man' does cross the 'borderline' on occasions in his determination to emerge triumphant from a particular incident. 'Sunshine' provided one example which was related by Jimmy.

> "'Sunshine' was at a perty an' three boys sterted tae mess aboot wi' his sister. He telt them tae stop it an' they wouldnae; he pulled oot a bayonet an' they ran their fuckin' arses off."

Courage and the willingness to use extreme violence to <u>win</u> are confused, with the result that many incidents escalate. Phil and his two brothers, who worked as 'bouncers', beat up a boy so badly - he refused to finish his drink quickly when 'time' was called - that he had to be taken to hospital. The violence used was out of all proportion to the 'offence', but my informant, Terry, had a sneaking regard for their direct approach.

> "You'd better watch ye dinnae get intae trouble wi' the Robinson brothers, they're fuckin' mad."

Likewise, Tony was opposed to the type of violence allegedly used by 'Hairy Brun' - 'bottlin' - but he prides himself on his ability to 'put ye doon <u>per-man-ent-ly</u>'. How precisely he did this depended on the circumstances. Thus, although the distinction between 'hard' and 'mad' appeared clear, in practice, the <u>situation</u> tended to determine the

1. James Patrick: op. cit. PP. 85 & 95.
2. P. Marsh: 'Careers for Boys.....': op. cit. PP. 346/348.

amount and nature of the violence used. In fact, an extreme reaction was often the result of fear or panic, although, of course, this was never openly admitted. A 'hard man' might slash someone occasionally to avoid being beaten up; the 'mad man' would, theoretically, need no such excuse.

A thread running through this perception of 'hardness' is the importance of 'reputation', the need to maintain an image of masculinity. All boys, though to varying degrees, were concerned with 'rep' and many incidents were the direct result of humiliation, whether actual or potential. Mel illustrates how humiliation can escalate an incident - in this case, only the intervention of the police averted a possible stabbing.

> "I got intae an argument wi' this big boy. He was jest tae big tae fight an' I wouldnae ha' a go. He pushed me up against a wall an' rubbed his fist against mah face jest tae show he was the boss.....
> My lassie callt me a fuckin' coward an' she got me so mad I went hame an' got a fuckin' great knife an' I was goin' tae stick it in the bastard. But the fuckin' polis lifted me on the way back."

Reputation was taken very seriously by the boys but mainly in the sense that they were more aware of the 'rep' of others than of their own. If a fight was imminent and their opponent was a well-known 'heid case', they might back down without being labelled a 'crapper'. Thus, Phil, himself regarded be many as 'mad', backed down when confronted by Billy Evans, a 'hatchet man', and there were no suggestions of cowardice.

> "Billy's a hatchet man; he's really screwy. I got intae a battle wi' him an' backed doon because ye dinnae ken what he's goin' tae dae. He dared me tae gae ootside fer a square-go, but I kent that he'd get me frae behind wi' a bottle, so I wouldnae gae oot - I'm nae fuckin' stupid."

Similarly, Pat had a reputation for 'losin' the heid in a battle' but he was a 'straight' fighter and so legitimately 'backed down' in a confrontation with Les Twist -'if ye turn yer back on him, he'll stab ye'.

However, Patrick's suggestion of an <u>obsession</u> with reputation was[1] not true in Edinburgh and Dundee in that most boys did not make the acquisition of 'rep' a priority. They were concerned rather with maintaining a minimum credibility as a 'battler'. Those who were concerned with their reputation usually hovered on the borderline with 'madness',

1.James Patrick: op. cit. P.74.

although even these boys did not usually talk about their 'rep', as opposed to a basic 'hardness' - this tended to be conferred on them and discussed by others. For example, 'Tomshe' was described by Johnny as 'very hard'.

> "Tomshe passed Kenny at the bottom of the Avenue an', fer nae reason, except maybe a bit o' lip, panelled him stupid - ye've got tae watch him."

Significantly, 'rep' seemed to a large extent to be rooted in the past. Thus, Harrytown 'used tae be tough'; 'the Jacobites were a real gang'; 'Bernie was a magic fighter'. The 'hard man' or the 'mad man' tended to be outside one's own peer group - the more 'distant', the more extreme the violence and the greater his reputation. Johnny Bennet, who was older and regarded with some fear by the younger boys, was treated with contempt by his peers.

> "Johnny's nae hard. He plays wi' the wee laddies. Fuckin' hell, I could gae roond Harrytown an' get a reputation by beating up wee laddies."

In fact, reputation often conformed to a symbolic pattern in that frequently it had little real basis in fact but developed through exaggeration and distortion. Thus, 'Rogey' of the 'Tongs' spent an entire evening on one occasion arguing with 'Muff' about who was the 'hardest man' in Dundee, both elaborating on each other's statements until all touch with 'reality' was lost.

Ideally, the carrying of weapons was an integral part of 'hardness' and 'gang' violence, closely linked with reputation. Patrick suggests that it was almost mandatory in the 'Young Team'.[1]

> "The 'chib-man' is the ideal corner boy, and it was by using weapons that the Young Team sought to boost their tenuous masculinity."

Even Boston, with his more 'sober' approach, concedes that weapon carrying and their use does seem to be on the increase, in Glasgow at least.[2]

> "....more and more young men in the city are carrying offensive weapons. They probably carry them for status reasons, with no intention of using them."

Certainly, the carrying of some kind of weapon in Edinburgh and Dundee did seem a widespread practice, although the reason given was always self-defence and they did not appear to be used very often.

> "Danny supported the suggestion that the boys carry weapons,

1.James Patrick: op. cit. P.189.
2.R. Boston: op. cit. P.150.

> though only for 'self-defence'. He produced a sharpened steel comb that he carried all the time - 'better tae be safe than sorry'."[1]

Likewise, Mac always carried an open razor - 'jest in case' - and many boys carried something that could be adapted to 'offensive' use. However, this practice was by no means universal and several of the boys left their weapons at home if they thought they might be 'lifted', an inconsistency that they could not explain, since such occasions implied a possible 'battle' - presumably the time when they might need a weapon. This finding broadly agrees with Patrick's observations in Glasgow.[2]

> "Not everyone 'kerried' by any means, and even amongst those who did, some used their weapons mainly on property, while others only carried them intermittently."

Similar inconsistencies were discovered in relation to the 'square-go', an ideal which owes much to the 'conventional' view that a 'real man' can settle his differences without any help. Patrick suggests that the fair fight is reserved for <u>intra-gang</u> differences.[3]

> "Within the team itself all differences were supposed to be settled by 'square-goes', weapons being reserved for all out-groups."

In Edinburgh and Dundee, on the other hand, it allegedly had a much wider role. Thus, the boys were quite aware of allegations of 'cowardice' from the press, police, and others, and always professed to act in 'self-defence'. In the same way, they always claimed that they were ready for a 'square-go' with anyone, but circumstances <u>almost always</u> prevented the realisation of this ideal.

> "Tony had a skirmish with Joe (the reputed 'leader' of the 'YBT') on the football field and called him a 'little bastard'. Later in the evening, slightly drunk, he called him a 'punk' and asked him for a 'square-go'. Joe arrived outside the 'Cav' with 'aboot forty boys' and accepted this challenge but Tony backed down. His excuse was that: 'I'm no feared o' him, but if I battered him, the others would ha' jumped in.'"

Indeed, sometimes the boys completely ignored this principle and a lone victim would be 'jumped' by several boys, without any attempt at fair play. On one occasion, while I was standing with a group of boys, a strange boy who walked past the flats was pursued by all present.

1. <u>Note</u>. Study of offenders charged with carrying offensive weapons in Glasgow by I.S.T.D. Scottish Branch: Glasgow Working Party: <u>Brit. J. of Criminology Vol.10</u> 1970 PP.255/276 - found many examples of threats but only one incident of serious injury done by weapon carrier.
2. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.122
3. Ibid: P.123.

An interesting incident in Dundee where a 'square-go' seemed the logical solution to a dispute that had gone on intermittently for several hours suggested the conclusion that individual conflict is <u>too</u> '<u>risky</u>' in the sense that it exposes a boy's reputation to possible humiliation - a 'square-go' implies a '<u>visible</u>' loser. Thus, while there was widespread acceptance of the ideal, in practice, the subjects were reluctant to expose themselves to possible ridicule.

> "Billy and Dek had been in two skirmishes and were dragged apart by their friends. Tired of their wrangling, I suggested a 'square-go' around the corner, thinking that this might settle the matter. They, however, quickly lost interest and shook hands."

'Hardness' among the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee was thus a 'value' accepted in principle, but inconsistently applied in practice. In many ways, their view of bravery was, in ideal terms, not inconsistent with that generally suggested as a 'key image' (stand up for yourself, self-defence, etc.) but it tended to be mediated and blurred by the situation, thus resulting in 'inevitable' exceptions. But, the boys did not regard these inconsistencies as a valid critique, countering such suggestions with the comment - '<u>What else could I do</u>?'

<u>Look After Your Mates</u>.

'Hardness' is a 'value' long-associated with working class 'material' culture, rather than an original adaptation associated solely with 'ganging'. On the other hand, 'looking after your mates' as an expression of group cohesion has been regarded as a <u>priority</u> for the 'gang'. The significance of this 'ideal' is suggested by Wilmott's finding of the importance of 'mates' - they form the main reference group in mid-adolescence for most boys.[1]

> "Among younger boys, (14/15), over half are usually with a group (two or three others) and most of the rest sometimes were....Even at 19/20 years, a total of three-quarters of the boys are with a group at least some of the time."

In this situation of company, it is necessary to be able to <u>rely on</u> your 'mates' in time of difficulty, and especially in a fight. Even Wilmott's 'peer groups' were subject to this 'ideal'.[2]

> "The conventions, among age peers, about loyalty and pride, sometimes impose an obligation on a boy to fight, whether he really wants to or not....."

But, in the 'gang', with its 'commitment' to rule-breaking and

1. P. Wilmott: <u>Adolescent Boys of East London</u>: London 1966: P.23.
2. Ibid. P.146.

violence, one would expect loyalty and mutual aid to have a far higher priority in the accepted 'value' hierarchy, and in Edinburgh and Dundee this proved to be the case - at least verbally. Most boys laid great stress on the need to 'back up your mates', especially in a 'battle'. John, for example, boasted that the boys 'would back me up tae the end and me them'.

Mike distinguished between two close friends by pointing out that Lenny was 'unreliable, especially in a battle', whereas Jimmy would never 'shite-off'. Likewise, Billy, Willie and Pat suggested that they had been so successful as a team of car-stealers because they were loyal - they would never 'grass'. Indeed, there were many examples of this ideal actually operating in the field.

On a minor level, the Coffee Bar was plagued by an outbreak of petty pilfering that was seriously threatening profits. After prolonged observation, it was discovered that the teenagers running the Bar were not charging their friends for sweets. They did not see this as stealing, more as doing a friend a 'favour'. When accosted, they protested, 'he wouldnae charge me anythin'.

On a more significant level, one of the most serious 'gang fights' in Dundee was caused by 'Rogey' who rushed to 'Burkie's assistance when he was bhased by the 'Huns'. When asked after the incident why he had become involved, he shrugged and said:

> "Burkie's in the 'Team', I couldnae watch the 'Huns' gi'ing him a kickin', so I jumped in."

Tony pointed out that 'mates' are essential for security; they are your main line of defence and that is why boys go out in groups, rather than individually. For the same reason, they tend to frequent 'Discos' and 'Pubs' where they are known, rather than risk the 'hazards' of a new 'Disco', which some other 'gang' might dominate.

> "We like tae gae oot together, then ye ken that ye're not on yer ain if there's any bother. That's why I gae tae Frisco's - I ken all the boys are there."

One or two of the boys went even further than suggesting the 'duty' of helping your immediate 'mates'. Mike and Bernie suggested that close friends operate within a wider context of loyalties and obligations based on the principle of 'familiar versus unfamiliar'. In a 'battle', the lines were drawn on this basis and one was <u>obliged</u> to join in. The following summarises their comments.[1]:

1.G. Suttles: <u>The Social Order of the Slum</u>: op. cit. - puts forward a similar view of the 'order of segmentation'.

Close friends versus Others
Secondary friends versus Others
Area versus Others
Town versus Others.

In fact, they were rather isolated in this 'grandiose' view and only one incident occured that could be regarded as supporting it. At one of the 'battles' between the 'Huns' and the 'Tongs', a group of boys arrived to 'back up' the 'Huns', claiming to be the 'Mob'.

> "Talking to the 'Mob' (from Charleston), it appeared that they knew some of the older boys from Jute Hill and had come to lend a hand in the present 'crisis'."

Certainly, they were not seen again and the evidence suggested that they had arrived for their stated purpose. But, this was the only case of its type recorded and therefore its significance should not be over-emphasised.

A more generally-accepted 'rule' was that 'mates don't grass' under any circumstances, even if caught by the 'polis'. Most boys agreed that to 'grass' was to show complete disregard for any 'standard'. The 'Young Team' in Glasgow laid a similar emphasis on this virtue.[1]

> "On the other hand, nobody, but nobody, informed the police of his assailants. A common hatred of authority banded them together."

But Patrick was forced to concede that even this was yet another example of 'gang mythology'.[2]

> "But since I left the gang, evidence has been presented to me that the 'no grassing' rule is more often violated than vindicated. One prominent member of the gang was arrested and within twenty-four hours all other members had been questioned by the police. The inference was obvious to everyone except the gang."

In Edinburgh, Jimmy, who had been especially vehement about the need to be loyal to your 'mates', was himself the victim of a 'grasser'. Moreover, he was aware of the identity of the boy concerned and took no punitive action, casting great doubt on the actual status of the condemnation of 'grassers'.

> "We stale some stuff fra' one o' the factories an' the security guards chased us. Billy jest stood there an' we shouted fer him tae run, but he was caught. We ran intae a street an' got some boys tae say we were playin' football. But Billy telt the polis an' I was lifted - I got sent away fer that.....I was mad at first, but I got over it an', though I see him aboot, I never bother."

In fact, there were many contradictions and failures to apply

1.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.101.
2.Ibid. P.101.

this principle of mutual support in practice. Significantly, it appeared most valid where very close friends were involved, becoming more inconsistent with the increasing shallowness of relationships. But, even close friends could desert you without any sanctions being applied as, for example, when Johnny was attacked by the 'Jungle'.

> "They chased us, so we jumped on a bus going doon the hill. We got off near the Polis station an' thought we were safe but they'd got on the next bus an' they jumped us. Davie pissed off wi' Charlie an' left me. They hit me across the heid wi' a fuckin' iron bar. Man, I was fuckin' shitin' mysel'."

Perhaps a factor in this inconsistency between ideal and action is the often-noted lack of 'cohesion' in the 'gang'. Even Patrick's 'Young Team' were less than structured in 'reality'.[1]

> "Group cohesion was low, interpersonal relationships were shallow and superficial. Core members operated like loners in a crowd and both they and marginal members flitted in and out of the group like shadows, without commitment to the group."

It is suggested that the organisation of the 'gangs' in Edinburgh and Dundee is largely symbolic, rather than an imperative to action and, this being the case, it is not surprising that ideals such as 'looking after your mates' are disregarded with such freedom from sanctions. Klein and Crawford go further, though not in the context of 'symbolic' adaptation, and suggest that the 'norms' themselves are 'mythical'.[2]

> "Group norms are relatively non-existent in the gang world, except as myths which are exploded upon test."

In fact, they specifically refer to 'loyalty and mutual support' when making this comment. Certainly, the experience in Edinburgh and Dundee suggests that these norms are applied, but <u>inconsistently</u>, and the violations are of the most glaring type. A reasonable conclusion might be that the 'norms' of loyalty and mutual support, while generally-accepted in principle, are spasmodic in application, thus suggesting the essentially 'symbolic' nature of 'ganging'.

<u>Territory - Do They Really Rule?</u>

'Gangs' have long been associated with 'turf' or 'pitch' but little real attempt has been made to objectify this phenomenon. Rather, any study of 'gangs' has tended to accept some kind of 'territory' as a

1. Ibid. P.183.
2. M.W. Klein & L.Y. Crawford: 'Groups, Gangs and Cohesiveness': <u>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</u> 1967 Vol.4 No.1 P.68.

predetermined 'fact'. James Patrick was so convinced of the validity of his subjects' statements that he provided a 'gang map' of Glasgow inside the cover of his book, with the various 'pitches' clearly marked.[1]

> "From the very beginning, the importance attached to territory had impressed itself on me. The gang knew its pitch and that of the other major gangs almost to the very last cul-de-sac....."

For Patrick, slogans are clearly utilitarian in their application - they mark out the 'territory' of the 'gang'.[2]

> "With chalk, magic markers, but most often with stolen tins of aerosol spray paint, the pitch was marked out with slogans for all to read."

Even Boston is forced to concede the sheer scale of the problem of graffiti, although in the end he is able to maintain some scepticism as to the actual purpose it serves.[3]

> "All the streets in some parts of Glasgow and some streets in any part of Glasgow bear signs of the presence of gangs ....every blank surface is covered by a palimpsest of graffiti....This writing on the wall is intended...to mark out 'territory' - a sort of human equivalent of a dog's peeing on lamp posts.
> At least so one would suppose, for - like most of what people say about the Glasgow Gangs - <u>this is not much more than guesswork</u>." (My emphasis)

Such 'territorial' sentiments would have found approval among the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee. They placed considerable emphasis on 'territory' and the dangers involved in crossing boundaries. These comments usually increased in strength with 'involvement' in 'ganging', that is, those boys who, for example, stressed the need to 'look after your mates', also warned of the 'risks' in ignoring boundaries between areas. Pete expressed this feeling.

> "Nae Jungle boy would come intae Harrytown. He wouldnae last five minutes; the whole team would turn oot - Ah'm tellin' ye."

In Dundee, these views were, if anything, stronger. A Coffee Bar with a 'juke-box' had just re-opened and the boys were anxious to see what it was like, but they were hesitant because of its location.

> "It used tae be guid, but there was an awfie lot o' stabbin's - <u>all the Mid go there</u>."

It has already been suggested that there are certain 'gangs' that

1.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.93.
2.Ibid. P.120.
3.R. Boston: op. cit. P.149.

have become a part of local 'tradition' and can be identified with a particular neighbourhood e.g. the 'YBT' and Harrytown. Other 'gangs' seem to have either an extremely short-lived existence based on a small peer group, or they never exist outside their creator's imagination. Indeed, it has been suggested that the 'gang' itself may not exist as an entity except insofar as it represents the group 'identity' of the adolescents in the area.

The significance of this suggestion is that for most working class boys the 'neighbourhood' has importance not because of the existence of a 'gang', but because that is where they live in a sense far more 'meaningful' than is commonly supposed. Their horizons tend to be limited by the 'neighbourhood', with the exception of their 'Saturday Night Out'. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that some kind of neighbourhood 'identity' - 'gang' - emerges; some common bond, symbolically expressed in the 'gang name', for example, the 'Fleet', 'Huns', 'Terror', and so on.

The limited movements of the 'Roundhouse Boys' are described in explicit terms by Parker and, while his view may be extreme, the point is made that the working class adolescent places considerable emphasis on the 'neighbourhood'.[1.]

> "The space the Boys utilise in their everyday lives....is so well-defined that, if they all wore soles which left red footprints, their living space would soon become defined on a map as red blocks with concise pathways between and few deviations from the main circuit."

This picture was largely confirmed by the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee. Apart from the occasional night out, they tended to 'hang aboot' in certain specified places, come rain or shine. Johnny, for example, was asked to give a brief outline of where he goes and what he does in the course of a week. (He claimed to be in the 'YBT' and was quite frequently involved in 'incidents')

> "Monday, Friday and Sunday, I go up tae the Community Centre an' meet the boys - we play records an' watch T.V. Rest o' the week is spent up at the flats (a multi-storey block) messin' aboot an' havin' a laugh."

This pattern was repeated with surprising conformity by many of his peers. However, different peer groups tended to have different meeting places scattered around the estate and one could see boys standing aimlessly at these places at almost any time of the day or

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.124.

night. The only deviation occurred when a boy decided he was 'too old' and spent his evenings in the 'pub' instead. His place would then be taken by a younger boy so that there was a continuous turnover of faces and groups, but still using the same meeting places.

It is in this context of 'hanging aboot' that one aspect of the significance of graffiti can be seen. Rather than a conscious attempt to mark out the boundaries of 'gang territory', it was one way of alleviating the inevitable boredom of having nothing to do and plenty of time to do it in. In fact, quite considerable efforts and imagination were expended in creating new designs and 'catch-phrases'. For example, one of the boys wrote on the Police Box on the outskirts of Barrackhill - 'Terrorphone: Terror Only'. Such original slogans as, 'Jesus Christ is in the Terror - God help you', were combined with a myriad of 'YBT rules O.K.', 'Fuck the Jungle', and other such less imaginative creations. Significantly, many slogans, often the most 'dramatic', were observed being painted by boys of between ten and thirteen, and even younger, who were not involved actively in 'gang violence'.

In Dundee, the incidence of graffiti in the Coffee Bar increased dramatically with the general denigration of the facilities. In fact, to attempt to alleviate boredom, one room was given over completely to this practice and it was noted that almost all the boys (and girls) participated to the extent that it soon became impossible to see the original paintwork.

Although the boys did go out of the area, this was usually on a Saturday night and in a decidedly unadventurous way. The practice of using the same public house and the same dance hall has already been described in a previous section - the 'Bar-Ox', for example, using Anderson's, while the 'YBT' used the Festival Tavern. However, it is worth repeating that there was little experimentation in entertainment; even the international attractions of the Edinburgh Festival passed largely unnoticed - indeed, some of the boys had never heard of it. In this respect, it is interesting that Patrick found a similar restricted pattern of entertainment in Glasgow.[1]

> "The Young Team generally met earlier in the evening....at a pub in the centre of their own area. It was only later at night that they travelled into town, <u>looking in at the other bar</u>." (My emphasis)

Insofar as the ideal of 'territory' existed in reality, it seemed

1.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.47.

to co-exist with the natural boundaries of neighbourhood and the existing limitations of movement among the local boys. It is debatable, therefore, how far it could be described as a 'gang' phenomenon. Nevertheless, many boys did believe in it in the same way as did the 'Roundhouse Boys'.[1]

> "The Boys actually believe they 'rule' and that there is no need to go out identity-building and image-seeking; since their territory is very rarely invaded, they have no reason to doubt the truth of their beliefs."

This question of 'belief' is most important because it introduces the concept of a symbolic structure, rather than any objective reality of cities divided between rival 'gangs'. Other areas were avoided for fear of attack but also because existing patterns of movement precluded visiting them anyway. Thus, when Patrick's 'Young Team' expressed their scepticism as to the real possibility of a visit from the 'Barnes Road', they were really reinforcing the empirical discovery that rival groups tend to stay in their own areas quite independently of any 'gang' involvement.[2]

> "It was up to the Barnes Road to make the first move. They says they're comin' up tae oor pitch, bu' they're aye sayin' it an' they never dae."

In this way, beliefs are strengthened by the absence of action. Because the 'Terror' do not come to Harrytown, the 'YBT' must rule. However, this is not to deny that incidents of a 'territorial' nature occur - infrequent they may be, but their symbolic impact is increased by the already-accepted view of 'territory' confirmed by the very lack of 'action'. The boys' reaction is - 'what did we tell ye'.

For example, Terry visited Clermiston - 'Jungle Land' - with some girls and was chased by a group of boys. This incident was much-discussed and, for a long time, none of the boys would venture into that area.

> "Me an' my mate had got off wi' a couple of lassies fra' Clermiston an' we were takin' them hame. There was a crowd o' boys at the Chippie when we got off the bus an' they recognised us an' sterted shoutin', 'Jungle', an' kickin' us up the arses. We were lucky to get away in one piece."

Another story given much credibility was that of Willie who, through family circumstances, had been forced to live with his sister in Barrackhill. For a long time, no-one bothered him, but then he started having 'trouble' with the local boys, culminating in an incident where he was jostled and had oil poured over his head. He was so worried

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.145. 2.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.92.

that, anticipating further trouble, he moved back to Harrytown.

> "Now they ken I'm fra' Harrytown, I'll be in real bother. They'll tell the big boys an' I'll get jumped nae danger."

In circulating this story, it was conveniently forgotten that Willie was well-known in Barrackhill and his links with Harrytown had never been considered worthy of action previously. The emphasis was on the incident which became more distorted in the telling.

As well as these occasional 'incidents' and a general belief that, since no-one came, this must be our 'pitch', another mechanism used for giving validity to 'territory' was the projection of a more definite structure <u>onto other groups</u>. Thus, while really it is obvious to us that our 'gang' does not wholly conform to the 'ideal', there are other 'gangs' that do. Boys in Harrytown used the local enemy, the 'Jungle', in this way.

> "The Jungle is a really hard gang. They used tae gae oot on buses together to stert battles. Ye ken the old swing park in Gorgi, that's where they all meat. Man, it's no safe tae gae up there."

The limited evidence available suggested that the 'Jungle' also used this technique. For example, 'Jimbo' adamantly stated that:

> "I wouldna' gae intae Harrytown on mah ain - I'm nae mad; they'd get their fuckin' team oot."

For much the same reason, there was a tendency to create an 'ideal-type' gang <u>that was the arch-enemy</u>. Patrick noticed this in Glasgow, where the 'Young Team' had created an image of the 'Calton Tongs' as the 'biggest, most hated gang' in Glasgow.[1]

> "The main outlet for the Young Team's aggression and hatred was its traditional enemy, the Calton Tongs; by all accounts, the most hated gang in Glasgow.....Only one other gang.... could boast of an analogous hierarchy of Big, Young, Tiny and Toddler Teams - the Cumbie from the Gorbals. <u>No such elaborate age divisions existed in Maryhill</u>." (My emphasis)

It could be suggested that the 'Tongs' were merely a justificatory reflection of the 'Young Team's' <u>imagined</u> structure - an 'ideal type', having no more basis in fact than the 'fantasies' of the 'Young Team'.

Certainly, this technique seemed to operate in Edinburgh and Dundee as well. In Edinburgh, the 'traditional' enemy of the 'YBT' was the 'Terror', which tended to embody all the fears of the boys. It proved almost impossible to persuade them to visit my house in Barrackhill, <u>even during the day</u>, because of the 'danger' of 'being jumped' - 'the

1. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.85 & 87.

Terror are fuckin' mad, they're everywhere'. Graffiti that went unnoticed in Harrytown was pointed out as evidence of the presence and organisation of the 'Terror'.

> "Jesus - look at that (pointing to the graffiti that could be seen from the bus). What a mess! Are ye sure we're no goin' tae be jumped?"

Similarly, in Dundee, the 'Fleet' were the 'gang' most feared by the 'Huns'. In fact, on one occasion, there was a crisis in the Coffee Bar because a visiting Disc Jockey also 'played' in a Club in Lochee, part of 'Fleet territory'.

> "Muff was really upset that the D.J.'s had told the 69 Club about the existence of the Coffee Bar. He was sure that the 'Fleet' would come.
> 'I'm tellin' ye, the Fleet will fuckin' smash this place, ye'll no stand a chance. Even the polis won't save ye."

In short, 'territory', like other aspects of 'gang' behaviour, demonstrated a verbal rather than an objective reality. The 'Fleet' never did come, but the fear persisted unabated. In many ways, a 'mythical' structure is more difficult to bring down than a real one, precisely because of its foundation in belief, which can make proof out of nothing and a minor incident into irrefutable evidence.

<u>'Ritual' Violence/Violence can be 'Fun'</u>.

Before closing this discussion of aspects of 'ganging', it is useful to point out that violence can be painful, but it can also be 'fun' (i.e. 'safe'), if managed properly. It is in the context of the group that the use of 'safe' violence can be seen most clearly. Of course, from the point of view of the wider society, the involvement of the group is seen as 'cowardice' and as yet another example of the 'senseless' behaviour of 'gangs'. Indeed, it cannot be denied that, although the boys always professed to act in 'self-defence', many incidents appeared to consist of blatant aggression. Some examples can perhaps illustrate this point.

> "(A young man) 'I was walkin' up the road when I saw an old man bein' jostled by two laddies....I didnae want tae get involved but when I heard thumpin', I turned roond an' chased them off.
> Later, in the pub wi' some friends, I had tae gae tae the toilet an' mah mates saw <u>six boys</u> follow me in so they went in tae. The boys saw it wasnae goin' tae be easy, so they left.....'
> (A girl) 'My feller was walkin' hame late on Friday night. <u>Four boys</u> sterted tae follow him, slowly, but, as he went faster, so did they. Finally, one shouted, 'Let's get the bastard', an' he ran fer his life.....'

> (Young boy from Harrytown) 'I was walkin' along the road towards Saughton Mains Cafe with a few o' the boys an' there was this boy in front o' us wi' his lassie. So we .....took the piss an' when he telt us tae fuck off, we chased him tae fuck.'"

As a general rule, in incidents, violence tended to be initiated by the group that was the strongest numerically, though 'self-defence' was still suggested, because of some insult, imagined or otherwise, from the other party. Of course, as has already been pointed out, the existence of the group is itself based on the need for 'security', as Danny emphasised.

> "If ye gae doon the toon on yer ain, ye're gain' tae get jumped. I always gae oot wi' a few o' the boys."

So the very 'need' for the group may itself be a factor in 'senseless' violence - the group tending to act together to ensure 'success'. Thus, H.J. Parker found that in Roundhouse insecurity tended to lead to a show of strength - strength being numerical rather than physical.[1]

> "A short period....when nearly all....Boys would be out together. This show of strength tended to provoke a group solidarity...amongst the Boys, illustrated with comments like, 'Roundhouse Rules'."

On the other hand, 'self-defence' can appear as aggression in that great stress was laid on 'gettin' the other bastard first'. The immediate 'cause' of the incident became secondary to winning - excuses came afterwards. Thus, Pat was trying to explain the 'essence' of a 'guid battler'.

> "It's nae strength; it's speed. Remember, ye've got tae get in first. If he gets ye, ye've nae chance. Dinna' bother squarin' up tae the bastard, stick the fuckin' heid on him."

A similar view was held in 'Roundhouse'; 'winning' was the prime objective - even if it made you appear the aggressor.[2]

> "On a very basic level, one can get into a fight for almost no apparent reason....based on the need to do unto others before they do unto you. Since there are no restrictions on the form of down-town fighting, one 'dig' or 'butt' can be decisive and must therefore be got in quickly."

It is this combination of the will to win and the prevalence of the group that makes much violence 'appear' cowardly and senseless to the spectator, though not to the participants.

However, as well as for 'self-defence', violence proved to be a major topic of conversation on the street corner, discussion ranging

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.140.
2.Ibid. P.145.

from television programmes to actual 'battles'. In a way not peculiar to lower-class adolescents, violence can confer 'power', prestige, and 'interest', not in the sense of 'pathology', violence for its own sake, but as a means of 'winning', of asserting one's supremacy. Thus, excuses were made for a 'poor' display in 'battle' and pride expressed if one had done well.

"Did ye see mah technique - magic, eh?"

It is in this context that the violence of the 'gang' was important. When incidents did occur, they provided prestige, status - and excitement. Hence the frequent finding that 'gang boys' take a keen interest in publicity.[1]

> "Another symptom of the Boys' desire to be noticed was..... their scrutinising of the newspaper for any mention of their own gang or any other gang. No matter how offensive or disparaging the article, it was read avidly."

When the Bus Company refused to take the Jute Hill boys on a trip to Aberdeen, this was treated as a great 'honour', a confirmation of their 'hardness', and discussed in 'gang' terms, though the Company used only the common area names.

> "'Muff': Do ye hear that, Harry, the Driver says he'll tak' the 'Toddy', the 'Fleet', or the 'Mid', but he'll no tak' the 'Huns'."

But, although violence permeated discussions of 'hardness', 'battles', and even football, the 'gang' itself, because of its lack of real structure, was not a vehicle for systematic aggression. Incidents tended to occur infrequently and to become the subject of exaggeration and distortion on the street corner. The interest in violence, which may have appeared extreme to the spectator, existed more in 'fantasy' than in action and was important precisely because it was interesting and exciting.

Yablonsky was right when he suggested the 'value' placed on violence, but his emphasis was wrong, at least in terms of the boys in Edinburgh and Dundee.[2] Violence was not valued for its own sake, for the actual satisfaction of 'bottlin' someone, but because it was 'fun' - dangerous and exhilirating at the same time. Patrick conveys this feeling of 'adventure' in his discussion of the final confrontation with the 'Barnes Road', and the Boys' analysis of their emotions at that time.[3]

1. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.96.
2. L. Yablonsky: The Violent Gang: op. cit. P.25.
3. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.136.

> "Big Fry....described the sensation as follows: 'See the feelin' in yir belly goin' intae battle, it's like the feelin' ye have when Rangers are attackin' the Celtic goal. Yir heart's racin', ye feel sick; it's better'n sex."

Likewise, in Edinburgh and Dundee, violence was treated as an element in having 'a guid time'. An ideal Saturday night out would include a 'battle', as well as drink and girls. Jimmy described a 'guid night'.

> "We'd been oot boozin' an' I'd had a skinful. We were at the bus-stop an' I was leanin' against it pukin' an' these three skinheids came along. They gi' us some lip, thinkin' we was paralytic but I grabbed one an' stuck the heid on him an' the boys jumped in - we gi' them fuck."

However, to be 'fun', violence must involve the least possible physical damage to oneself. The image projected by the media of the 'epic struggle' did not appeal to the boys. Hence the prevalence of the view that you have 'got tae get in first', and the tendency to seek security in groups. But, even though violence could be exciting and 'entertaining', actual incidents were not as frequent as street corner conversation suggested. Indeed, confrontation often never went further than a verbal exchange of insults, with a lot of noise and some missile-throwing. The 'gang fights' actually witnessed involved little hand-to-hand combat and a great deal of diffuse movement and swearing, as with this clash between the 'Jungle' and the 'Young Leith Team'.

> "I was gain' doon Leith Street wi' the boys an' there was a crowd o' boys comin' up the other side o' the road. We shouted, 'Jungle', an' they yelled back, 'Young Leith Team';..... there were a few crates o' milk bottles in a close an' they grabbed them an' sterted throwin' them, so we had tae run off." (Related by Andy, a 'Jungle member'.)

Boston points out that, even in Glasgow, the pattern of hospital admissions does not suggest intense 'gang conflict', but rather, confrontations between individuals.[1]

> "....assault victims....usually come in one at a time, and people at the hospital could not remember any incidents where there had been a great rush of casualties all at once, as might be expected after a gang fight."

On the other hand, those incidents that do occur tend to be of the verbal variety noted in Edinburgh and Dundee.[2]

> "Occasionally, two gangs meet for a big battle. These very rare occasions seem to consist largely of the two gangs

1.R. Boston: op. cit. P.151.
2.Ibid. P.149.

jumping up and down and screaming at one another at a distance, with a certain amount of throwing of stones and half-bricks."

Even Patrick's 'Young Team' conformed to this pattern, with a 'real' fight often being avoided in favour of a lot of noise and abuse.[1]

"If squaring up to a rival team, the boys shouted almost hysterically:
'Dae youse want tae mess? Dae youse want tae go right ahead? Youse goaney cop yir whack. Goaney cut yir heid <u>right</u> aff yir boadey.'"

In short, violence is another element in a street corner world based to a large degree on the symbolic re-working of the existent. Incidents do occur, reflecting this symbolic structure, but they should not be taken as implying the existence of structured 'gangs' based on violence. As with other 'ideals', such as 'territory' and 'looking after your mates', violence tended to be <u>verbal</u> rather than <u>actual</u>[2] and can be most fruitfully seen, not as a 'pathological' reaction, but as one element in a pattern of leisure-time fulfilment embracing a continual battle with boredom and the potential tedium of 'hanging about'.[3] Moreover, when one remembers the situation of the boys, on the street corners of large, anonymous housing estates for the greater part of the week, and further places this monotony in the context of 'dissociation' from education <u>and</u> work as a source of 'satisfaction', it can be seen that violence and aggression, albeit largely symbolic, can be a useful resource in adapting to this circumstance. Violence, like 'gangs', can create 'meaning' and 'interest' but should not be elevated to the status of a 'subculture of violence', with the assumption of mass 'sociopathology'. The circumstances surrounding the use

1. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.117.
2. <u>See also:</u>
   H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.143/5 <u>and</u>
   W.B. Miller: 'Violent Crimes in City Gangs': <u>Annals</u> 364 March 1966 P.110.
3. <u>Note.</u>
   In Chapter Six on Symbolism, the idea of 'ritual aggression' is taken up in more detail. The 'ritual' aspects of 'gang fights' are developed as one aspect of the struggle for 'identity' in the large council housing areas. It is suggested that the largely 'ritual' pattern of aggression allows the <u>experience</u> of feelings of group identity and the <u>creation</u> of meaningful relationships. However, the immediate concern in this chapter is merely to illustrate the essentially symbolic basis of 'ganging'.

of violence in Edinburgh and Dundee suggest an 'utilitarian' attitude based on 'thrill' and 'exploit' with 'violence' as one of the few resources left to the boys for symbolic appropriation and re-working.

Police as 'Pressure'.

Although the role of the Police in the elaboration and validation of the symbolic adaptations created by lower class adolescents was not a central concern of this study, it cannot be passed over totally because of the unique position of the Police as representatives of social 'order', not from afar, but 'on the streets', in the neighbourhood. Social reaction is important because of its dual nature, that is, in this case, reaction by the Police and reaction by the boys to this 'control'. A situation of mutual reinforcement exists, with the symbolic adaptations of the boys rubbing up against 'reality', as represented by the Police. The Police view of the lower class adolescent is crucial to both the validation of the symbolic structures created and the maintenance of 'pressure' on the boys. In this section, it is intended to use the limited empirical data of this study to present an admittedly superficial view of the interrelationship between the boys in their 'repressed' situation and the policeman as the front line of that 'repression' - as 'pressure'.

It has been suggested that, in general, lower class adolescents are aware of the 'key images' linking 'material cultures' into a social 'totality'. Equally, they are aware of the necessity of 'authority' and even the need for the Police to enforce the 'Law' and protect the citizenry - occasionally, even they have need of the Police. The 'problem' is quite simple.[1]

> "The necessity of Authority is thus not in question by either side....What is constantly in question is the behaviour of officials who represent Authority."

This 'problem' is crucial because of the situation of many lower class adolescents who spend a great deal of time 'on the streets', in public space, where they are more likely than other citizens to come into contact with the police. At the same time, their 'solutions' to potential tedium are often highly visible and sometimes illegal, and thus likely to attract special attention.

On the other hand, the Police must not be stripped of their humanity - they too are real people and thus subject to the processes of

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.159.

'rationalisation' and 'labelling'; they also must mediate their constraints and establish their priorities, give meaning to their situation. The Policeman is faced with two problems, both of which affect the way he deals with the lower class adolescent. First, he must come to terms with his own 'values' in his role as Policeman and, second, he must learn to do the job 'efficiently'. His 'solutions' are 'logical' adaptations to the constraints he faces and must mediate if he is to be a 'good' policeman.

The empirical evidence on this subject was limited and so exaggeration and distortion is a possibility that must be guarded against. However, it was found that Policemen, especially 'beat men', tended to emphasise certain popular views of the 'gang' and the 'delinquent', making them the basis for the 'discretion' that is so important a part of their role. This view, which reflects the 'public' suspicion that crime is most prevalent among the lower classes, was to be found in comments made by several 'beat' and 'panda' policemen in Edinburgh and Dundee.

> "They're (talking about a large council estate in Dundee) gettin' the last o' the people who lived in the tenements; the ones who won't work, tough an' dirty - a lot o' them buggers are movin' in."

Similarly, there is little value in 'permissiveness' - 'discipline' is needed. The 'do-gooders' do not realise the 'inevitability' of crime for a certain section of the population - <u>they</u> are only making things 'worse'.

> "(Policeman) They stert offf tealin' an' they keep on doin' it. The wee laddie wi' a record grows up tae be a criminal - they keep on thievin'."

A 'deprived' background is often used by the boys themselves as an 'excuse'. The boys know what they are doing and are 'experts' at manipulating the 'reformers'. Only the police know the true nature of the 'delinquent' and how to 'handle' him.

> "If ye allow them tae make a fuckin' great escape clause out of drink, they'll all be in Court sayin', 'But I was drunk, your honour'. They're no stupid."

Without labouring this point unduly, an equally structured and stereotyped view is taken of the 'gang'. For the policeman, 'symbolic structures' are the preserve of the 'academic'; he sees action (infraction) and must react to it. He cannot perform his duties adequately, or so he feels, without a clear direction to guide his

discretion. For these general reasons, and because he is susceptible to the 'popular' mood, he tends to see 'gangs' as a 'reality', as an 'action' structure.

The assumption of progressive decline, that 'young people to-day' are looking for 'trouble', is reflected in a statement by a police spokesman during a campaign against the 'Wreckers' in the Edinburgh Evening News (18/8/72).

> "A force spokesman said to-day: 'There is quite an amount of paint spraying in our area and it tends to be on the increase. <u>There seems to be a tendency for younger people to be involved in this kind of thing than in the past, and gangs appear to be more prevalent.</u>'" (My emphasis)

This 'official' view was supported by statements from 'beat men' in Edinburgh, the informants clearly indicating a belief in the 'organisation' of 'gangs' in general and the 'Terror' in particular.

> "Gangs are very much a part of the Edinburgh scene....
> I know the ringleaders of the 'Terror'; when a fight is planned, I hear about it.....
> If you stop a bus on a saturday night, I guarantee you that 90% of the boys are carrying offensive weapons."

Of course, it is not suggested that all policemen conform to this pattern of 'conservatism', <u>or even</u> a majority - the evidence is simply not strong enough to support such an allegation. But, the police are obviously not irrational, either individually or as a group, and therefore the action they take against lower class adolescents must be 'logical in their terms. Their 'victims' suggest that 'all polis are bastards' or 'on the take', but an unreserved acceptance of these comments would not be useful as an explanation of police action, in the same way as 'pathology' has not proved a very useful tool in delinquency research. It seems more 'reasonable' to suppose that police methods 'on the streets' are based on an assessment of the 'problem' in certain terms - these tending to reflect 'popular' views of delinquency as an indicator of poor parental 'discipline', 'weak' teachers, the 'permissive society', and so on. Only an assumption of this kind makes the following description of police methods comprehensible.

<u>Police Action - 'Move them on'.</u>

It has been suggested that, to a great extent, the 'organisation' of the 'gang' is <u>symbolic</u>. Incidents do occur, but, contrary to belief, they tend to depend more on the situation than on any operational 'gang structure'. The action of the police with regard to the problem

of 'gangs' is therefore most important as a factor in their 'organisation'. Indeed, a police assumption of 'gang structure' and appropriate action could lead to increased credibility for those boys who are also saying that there is 'organisation'. It is further possible that such action could help maintain the 'credibility' of the symbolic adaptation. At the very least, incidents could be 'officially' defined as 'gang fights' and a 'public' image of a 'gang problem' could therefore be created and validated.

That the Police take a strong line with lower class adolescents has been remarked on by several writers. Boston reserves judgement on this matter, saying only that:[1]

> "The only place to go in Easterhouse is out on the street where, according to the boys, the police....harass them."

H.J. Parker, on the other hand, finds differential treatment proved, and concentrates on pointing out the need for 'rationalisation' if the policeman is to do his job 'properly'.[2]

> "The policeman, because he rarely actually witnesses crimes, starts his investigations by using cues which have shown to pay off in the past. The downtown adolescent thus suffers the fate of being under methodical suspicion."

The police tend to use 'suspicion' as a practical tool, using 'resemblance' to identify sections of the population as <u>potentially</u> troublesome. Their efforts can then be concentrated more economically on these groups. But, most important, the obvious method to be used in controlling 'suspicious' groups is 'harassment' - '<u>move them along.</u>' The practical effects of this policy are of secondary importance to the police - in their terms, it is 'rational'.[3]

> "...the way to implement the method of suspicion is to harass. But it is not considered harassment by police because they have an accredited reason for methodical suspicion."

Significantly, while the adolescents so brusquely 'moved on' may accuse the policeman of 'discrimination', this is not true - he is merely operating on a set of assumptions relevant to his role.[4]

> "...negotiation of reality (by the police) is not due to the policeman's machiavellianism, but rather to their desire, in the name of administrative efficiency, to jump the gap between...theoretical and empirical guilt."

1.R. Boston: op. cit. P.150. <u>See Also</u>: D. Downes: <u>The Delinquent Solution</u>; op. cit. P.240.
2.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.163.
3.D. Matza: <u>Becoming Deviant</u>: op. cit. P.193.
4.J. Young: 'Role of the Police as Amplifiers of Deviancy':in S. Cohen: (Ed.): <u>Images of Deviance</u>: Penguin, Harmondsworth 1971: P.44.

Certainly, there appeared to be little doubt that in Edinburgh and Dundee, the process described above did operate. There were many complaints about the police tendency to 'move on' any groups of teenagers seen 'loitering' on the streets.

> "We're moved on all the time. I've even been leanin' against my ain front door an' been telt by the polis tae get movin' or be lifted.....
> If they catch ye leanin' against a wall or door near a shop, they stop ye an' search ye fer sharp instruments which could be used fer breakin' in. If they find anythin', they take ye up fer loiterin' wi' intent."

Indeed, there were occasions when I myself was moved on, which brought home the ubiquity of this practice and also the possible effects on self-esteem. One such incident will be described to illustrate these comments - the personal experience of the field worker need not necessarily be dismissed as biased, although it is true that my attitudes may have led me to perceive the event as more meaningful than it actually was for the boys concerned, to whom such incidents were 'routine'.

> "I was talking to 'Moose' and the boys when we were interrupted by two local policemen who invited the boys (and myself) to 'get movin', before ye catch cold standin' there'. The boys moved, although I hesitated, only to be told brusquely to 'get movin'."

In fact, it was common for 'panda cars' to stop outside the Coffee Bar and the occupants to shout at the boys standing outside, 'Get back inside or get lifted'.

So widespread and accepted was this practice, without any real justification in terms of crime rates, that one local vicar protested vigorously about the police 'attitude' to teenagers in his area.

> "That sort of talk (about a 'gang problem') is just rubbish ....These boys (at his Youth Club) will go back to Fintry now in a group and they will be pursued by the police, moved from place to place - <u>that</u> is our crime problem."

In Dundee, the practice appeared to be carried to such extremes that an interview to discuss the 'problem' was arranged with the Community Involvement Branch of the police. Certainly, there appeared little doubt that the man on the beat was carrying out 'unofficial' policy, rather than relieving his own frustrations and aggression.

> "Chief Inspector: 'The man on the beat can't take the chance (of leaving groups alone); he's got to move them on. What happens to him if, no sooner has he turned the corner, than they start fighting.'"

This interview lent weight to Stanley Cohen's suggestion that the enforcement of the 'law' can be a double-edged sword. Law-breaking is not always necessary to justify action; often its absence is sufficient - the deterrent must be working.[1]

> "Unfulfilled expectations, however, did not lead to a breakdown in the warning system or the erection of psychological defences against threat; if things did not happen, this could be explained in terms of the effectiveness of the deterrent."

Certainly, there appears little doubt that the police in Edinburgh and Dundee adopted a view of lower class adolescents as potential 'deviants' and their actions appeared to be based on this assumption - groups of teenagers must be dispersed and even individuals kept moving. But, as well as preventing 'crime', the police have another 'problem' which is of equal importance - the need to enforce 'respect' for their role as 'guardians of the Law'. Their concern with 'respect' leads to the phenomenon known as police 'brutality', another factor in the symbolic 'alienation' of working class youth.

Police 'Brutality'.

Lower class adolescents, such as the boys in this study, often complain about the use of excessive force by the police, suggesting that this is due to particular individuals with 'sadistic' tendencies. This is not generally true. As with the practice of 'moving on' and the harassment of boys with convictions, the police have reason behind their methods, although individuals may have a taste for 'power'. Authority demands 'respect' and, as the representative of the 'law', the policeman is entitled to 'respect'. Failure to accord the 'proper' deference, to answer back, allows the use of force to restore 'order', though this force is usually thought of as equivalent to a parental 'clip around the ear'. The odd individual may go too far, but generally the policeman uses his 'commonsense'. He feels that this kind of instant retribution is favoured by the 'man in the street'.

Indeed, an interesting comparison can be drawn from anthropological literature to support the suggestion that 'violence' can be used to enforce 'respect' in a broad sense, as a means both of teaching the 'victim' and also of symbolising the superiority of the striker. Thus, the Bena of Southern Tanzania use blows in a constructive rather than destructive way, and it might be argued that the police see their use

1.S. Cohen: Folk Devils and Moral Panics: P.148. McGibbon & Kee: 1972.

of 'violence' in a similar light, as both applying an inducement to 'improvement' and as a means of establishing their superiority vis-a-vis the offender.[1]

> "Thus blows symbolise quite disparate significata: teaching, improvement, concern for the welfare of another and acceptance of responsibility for him....At the same time, blows symbolise the superiority of the striker to the recipient. This last, in fact, is quite likely the most consistently present aspect of blows."

Certainly, Patrick found that the demeanour of the boys was the most important factor in determining police action.[2]

> "Their demeanour in dealing with the police was always unco-operative, hostile and abusive, and it is exactly this fractious behaviour which....is the major criterion for determining what action a policeman will take."

Indeed, Stan Cohen goes a great deal further and suggests that enforcement may be directed <u>not only</u> against rule-breaking <u>but also</u> against lack of 'respect' - this may become a <u>priority</u> in police activity.[3]

> "...a great deal of enforcement activity is directed not to the enforcement of the rules, but getting respect from the people the enforcer deals with."

In short, the policeman faced with 'disrespect' and 'hostility' may transform this <u>attitude</u> into 'rule-breaking'. Since lack of 'respect' probably indicates a tendency towards criminal behaviour, at least as far as the officer is concerned, this is a logical short-cut.[4]

> "By identifying disrespect and hostility towards the police as indicators or signs of criminality, the police are able to close quickly the problematic issue of disposition and arrest their abusers."

Police 'brutality' then, may be a widespread phenomenon intended to persuade a 'rebellious' adolescent population that 'respect' is nine tenths of the 'Law'. Indeed, a discussion of the assumptions behind police activity reveals a 'mythology' that complements that of the boys - the police view of the nature of the lower class adolescent therefore often leading to 'inappropriate' action. At the same time, their 'victims' adaptation to life 'on the streets' is often dependent on

1. M. Swartz: 'The Cultural Dynamics of Blows and Abuse among the Bena of Southern Tanzania': P.130 in R.F. Spencer (Ed.) <u>Forms of Symbolic Action</u>: 1970: Univ. of Washington Press.
2. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.126. 3. S. Cohen: <u>Folk Devils</u>...op. cit. P.168
4. S. Box: <u>Deviance, Reality & Society</u>: P.182. Holt, Rinehart & Winston: 1971./<u>See also</u>: 'M. Cain: On the Beat: Interactions and Relations in Rural and Urban Police Forces': P.73 in S. Cohen (Ed.) <u>Images of Deviance</u>: op. cit.

police harassment giving credibility to <u>their</u> symbolic structures of 'hardness' and 'ganging'.

Certainly, in Edinburgh and Dundee, the subject of police 'brutality' dominated much conversation and many 'incidents' had long since become part of folklore. 'Respect' did seem to be a key issue, with 'lip' usually provoking an angry police reaction.

> "(Charlie) I used tae gae up tae the Cav. One night I went up after a few bevies. When I got there, there'd been a battle an' the polis had shut the doors. I went up tae the door tae see what was happening an' one of the polis telt me tae get lost. I gi' him a V-sign an' they lifted me. The bastards dragged me tae the van sae hard that they ripped my fuckin' shirt."

On the other hand, violence did seem to be used on occasion to encourage boys to admit their guilt. The police would probably regard this as 'bending' the rules rather than 'brutality'.

> "(Phil) I was taken intae a room fer questioning an' there were polis all roond a big table. They telt me tae sit doon an' asked me questions. I said I knew nothing an' had tae duck as one o' them took a swing at me.
> I was shittin' mysel', I can tell ye an' I shouted:
> 'Dinnae touch me, I'll tell ye anythin'.'
> The polis in charge (allegedly an Inspector) said:
> 'That's better, just answer the questions and you won't get hurt'."

A third category, which is difficult to integrate, is that of violence for its own sake. Of course, it is possible that, in telling the stories, the informants omit <u>their</u> offensive behaviour.

> "Tony claimed he was taken into a Police Box when he was 'steamin' and systematically 'beaten up' by several officers. I myself saw the evidence of a beating - swollen nose, two black eyes - but it is impossible to prove this story."

Significantly, the boys accepted this violence almost as an occupational hazard and it proved impossible to persuade them to make a complaint. They regarded it as a complete waste of time and effort.

> "What's the point o' makin' a complaint? Whae's goin' tae believe me wi' mah record when the polis is standin' there actin' innocent? You're fuckin' crazy."

This phenomenon of 'victimisation' and 'violence' at the hands of the police must not be neglected as a separate issue, distinct from the problems of 'ganging' and juvenile deviance. It has already been implied that the methods employed by the police in 'problem areas' complement and give credibility to the symbolic structures created by lower class

adolescents, but the effects of police activity need to be examined in more detail. In short, do the police unwittingly reinforce the very behaviour they are ostensibly trying to eradicate through 'rational' policy?

Effects of Police Action.

The preceding pages have described a police presence in certain (working class) areas that concentrates its efforts on petty rather than serious crime, and often on no crime at all in the legal sense. Indeed, for the police, the mere presence of large numbers of working class adolescents in an area could be regarded as constituting a 'problem' in itself, because of their tendency to lack 'respect'. The policeman does not see it as reasonable that attention paid to individuals and groups who are often 'doing nothing' in every sense of the word, may result in a feeling of 'injustice' and, possibly, abuse. It is the nature of police activity that is significant - the fact that their perception of the 'problem' leads to enforcement patterns that are directed at 'attitude' rather than just misdemeanour. It would indeed be controversial if the police were to descend on the middle-class suburbs of cities in search of appropriate 'attitudes' and yet the present situation, observed with monotonous regularity by field workers, goes almost unnoticed - but not by the boys. Matza remarks on this tendency to collect 'injustices'.[1]

> "His knowledge of local history supplies him with an initial set of incidents on which he may subsequently build a memory file that collects injustices."

'Local history' may be taken to mean local 'folklore' which has been shown to be an element in the symbolic adaptation of 'ganging' created by the boys - the 'superficial' covering to some extent validating the 'structure'.

Although Matza concentrates on the Courts, much of his discussion of the need for 'proof' is equally applicable to 'police/juvenile transactions'. Using the absence of 'respect' as 'proof' is hardly likely to convince the accused that he is being treated fairly. Such short-cuts from demeanour to criminality serve only to further the creation of a local 'incident file'.[2]

> "Proof may be a ritual....(but)...each time it is omitted, the incident may enter the unwritten annals of subcultural delinquency."

1. D. Matza: Delinquency & Drift: op. cit. P.102.
2. Ibid. P.109.

H.J. Parker supports the suggestion that the police, through their methods, make a significant contribution to the 'conversation culture' on the street corner. The Boys pay particular attention to stories of 'injustice', using them to withdraw credibility from the police rather than from their own actions.[1]

> "Completely false arrests are used by the conversation culture to back up stories of how inaccurate and malicious the police really are, and the Boys make a meal of such affairs."

In other words, the obvious harassment that has become a significant element in the police treatment of juveniles is not accepted as an indicator of the Boys' 'deviance', but seized on as visible proof of the practical injustices of the 'system'. Moreover, the Boys preserve their 'conventional identity' by blaming the officials who administer the Law, rather than the Law itself.[2]

> "The subculture of delinquency shows antagonism to the law, but this antagonism is primarily directed at the officials who man the system."

This 'neutralisation' of the 'Law' is significant because it forms part of the backcloth to 'deviant' behaviour. The 'condemnation of the condemners', that is, the police, is a basic element in the validation of symbolic adaptations such as 'ganging'. The situation is therefore approached from both sides with expectations that may well lead to mutual reinforcement. The interaction with 'authority' on the streets provides reinforcement both for the boys restricted situation and the symbolic 'solutions' adopted. The 'pressures' employed by the police on behalf of 'order' act as a continuous 'guideline' against which the boys can test their images of 'structure' and be sure of a positive response.

Gill found that the 'Luke Street Boys' directly related the methods used by the police to their own behaviour - police 'injustice' was used to 'justify' infraction.[3]

> "To the boys it was always someone else 'who started it' and, if arrested, 'they wouldn't mind if they'd done anything.....
> Their reactions were considered to be a completely justified response to the perceived attributes of the police and in this sense any feeling of the 'wrongness' of their actions was neutralised."

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.165.
2.D. Matza: Delinquency & Drift: op. cit. P.101.
3.O. Gill:'Urban Stereotypes & Delinquent Incidents': British Journal of Criminology Vol.16 No. 4 Oct. 1976 P.327.

Indeed, in Edinburgh, 'Mel' was visited by the police and arrested for theft but his immediate reaction was that they were as 'guilty' as he was - they probably kept the stolen property.

> "When the polis came tae take away the stuff, they didnae gi' us any receipts. I reckon they jest kept it - everybody's on the fiddle."

On the other hand, the action of the police may allow guilt to be deflected away from the incident, as in the following example. Terry stressed the 'violence' of the police, minimising the fact that he was carrying a weapon.

> "I was up at the Wing wi' some o' the boys an' we were kerryin' long sticks an' shoutin', 'YBT'. A polis van came up an' I dropped mah stick in a doorway. The polis telt me tae gae an' pick it up. I said I wasnae kerryin' one so they telt me tae gae in the van. They kept sayin' I'd better gae an' pick it up. I said I wouldna' an' one o' the bastards punched me in the mooth."

Indeed, while Terry obviously knew he was being 'rowdy', H.J. Parker points out that it is possible for the Boys to become so fluent in their own defence that they almost believe the story themselves.[1]

> "At times, the Boys hardly distinguish between the truth and their defence story themselves, so that in a pub conversation they may actually find themselves practising their story of innocence to people that know better."

But the development of a 'history' of 'police/juvenile transactions' and the subsequent 'neutralisation' of guilt on a general rather than a purely situational level, are not the only results of police 'attitudes' and action in 'problem areas'. For some of the boys the process may go much further - credibility may be withdrawn completely from the police and hostility installed in its place.

The boys of the 'Young Team' had been pushed further along this road than their counterparts in Edinburgh and Dundee. However, it is important to remember that, even here, the conflict centres, not around the 'Law', but around the activities of a particular section of the police - the 'riot squad'. We should not make the mistake of assuming total alienation from the rest of society and the creation of a 'contra-culture'.[2]

> "What infuriated the Young Team so much was the open contempt the riot squad had for gang members. The boys were convinced that even the local police singled them out for questioning whenever the slightest breach of the law had been committed."

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.175. 2.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.129.

At the other end of the scale, the Boys of 'Roundhouse' feel that the police are irrelevant 'strangers' rather than enemies.[1]

> "To the .....youth who spend so much time on the streets, the three-shift system gives the impression that large numbers of anonymous and potentially troublesome strangers are patrolling the area in strength at all times."

This range of reactions was repeated in Edinburgh and Dundee. Some boys became angry at the very mention of the police, while others were more 'tolerant', but still regarded the policeman as a potential enemy. Paul, for example, was very hostile.

> "I hate the fuckin' polis, they're always after ye, pickin' on ye. If ye've been inside, they're always at your door."

Other boys suggested that, while the police had a job to do, the way they did it was wrong - they assume too readily that teenagers are breaking the law, as in the following case of false arrest.

> "Once we were taken up by the polis because a relative of the Earl of Dalkeith said two boys had been goin' doon lines o' parked cars breakin' mirrors. We were there so they lifted us. But, afterwards, they couldnae find any damaged cars, so they had tae let us gae."

Another reaction was 'adaptation'. This might range from an 'acceptance' of police harassment to a diminution in the deterrent effect of police methods. The first was illustrated by the reluctance of boys to complain about police behaviour - it was a fact of life that must be accepted if one lived in a 'tough' area. 'Real' solutions were not available to the working class boy; he must seek redress in the establishment of an 'identity' reflecting and, hopefully, transforming these 'repressions'.

> "I'm tellin' ye, what's the point? Wha's goin' tae believe mah word against two or three polis.....One o' the boys was asked by the Judge if he had anythin' tae say an' he did complain that he had been battered. The Judge asked the polis what happened an' they said, 'Resisting arrest'. <u>They always get off.</u>"

On the other hand, the sheer scale of police attention, although intended to act as a deterrent, may result in the loss of fear, a crucial element in deterrence - the boys treat it as a matter of <u>routine</u>.[2]

> "So often are the boys stopped, questioned and searched that the procedure, which would aggravate many other citizens, does not unduly upset them."[3]

1.H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.181. 2.Ibid. P.162.
3.See also: I. Piliavin & S. Briar:' Police Encounters with Juveniles': <u>American Journ. of Sociology</u>: Vol.70 1964/5 PP. 210/13.

The police then play an important part in the total description of adolescent adaptation to a leisure 'vacuum' and an objectively repressive 'material' circumstance. On one level, they give credibility both to the image of certain areas as 'tough' or 'hard' and to the existence of a 'gang problem' in their interactions with the lower class adolescent. The boys' tendency to spend their leisure 'on the streets', combined with the prevailing pattern of peer group relationships, makes them highly visible. At the same time, their efforts to 'have a good time' may often result in behaviour which, while not illegal, may offend the policeman's sense of 'order'. The result is almost inevitable conflict, a 'problem' which has been found in many working class areas.

This 'conflict' is exacerbated by the police emphasis on 'respect' which the boys are often reluctant to give because of the perceived 'injustices' of the 'system'. A vicious circle may be set up where the police approach assumes disrespect and abuse, thereby provoking the boys into angry reaction. Over a period of time, a 'ritual' pattern of 'police/juvenile transactions' may be set up which leads to the range of responses described in the preceding section. Police 'violence' and 'harassment' become part of local folklore, while teenage obduracy, 'delinquency', and 'gang membership' enter into police 'mythology'. The overall result is that the police may unwittingly play a significant role in the creation of 'hard areas' and a 'gang problem' by 'validating' the symbolic attempts of the lower class adolescent to 'transcend' his situation.

Of course, this pattern applies generally to areas with large numbers of lower class adolescents, such as council housing estates, but it has special relevance for the phenomenon of 'ganging'. Since it has been suggested that the 'gang' is essentially a symbolic structure and may be regarded as an adaptation to leisure 'on the streets', a 'difficulty' emphasised by the multiple constraints of working class 'material' circumstance, the police play a central role in giving credibility to this 'structure', in assisting in the definition of incidents as 'gang fights'. By their acceptance of the basic premises of local folklore, they confirm the boys' impression of 'gangs' as a 'meaningful' identity, an action structure.

CHAPTER FIVE.

THE 'GANG' IN 'ACTION'.

The suggestion of the last chapter has been that, while 'gang' incidents do occur, they reflect the occasional manifestation in action of a symbolic structure, rather than organised 'warfare'. 'Ganging', without minimising its consequences, can on one level be seen as an attempt to invest potential tedium with excitement and 'thrill'. Its origins are unclear and will be discussed further in the next chapter but may perhaps be found in the tendency in Scotland, and elsewhere, to build large, impersonal housing estates with poor amenities, thus emphasising the leisure-time difficulties of the lower class adolescent who has been demonstrated as spending most of his time outside the home, 'on the streets'. Moreover, he is further constrained by his tendency to confine his movements to a limited area within which he feels 'secure', thus rendering inappropriate the possible 'solution' of resorting to the attractions of the city centre which, in any case, are expensive and selective in terms of age and, sometimes, dress.

The amount of time spent in the neighbourhood, coupled with the frustrations of inactivity, may have led to an attempt to create a meaningful symbolic structure based on 'action' that could provide a possible solution. Thus, districts became 'territories' and their adolescent populations, 'teams' - Harrytown became the 'YBT', Barrack-hill the 'Terror', Gorgi the 'Jungle', Lochee the 'Fleet', and so on. But, since the 'structure' was rooted in neighbourhood, rather than in identifiable individuals and peer groups, 'leadership' and 'action' became more the subject of 'fantasy' than fact - the 'YBT', for example, acts sporadically and in an undirected fashion because its posited 'organisation' is largely symbolic, verbal rather than actual. Any other point of view would be valid only if it could be demonstrated that 'gang warfare' in an 'organised' sense, with recognised leadership, did actually occur. This was not the case - 'gang' incidents were confused and unpredictable, with even 'leaders' often not knowing that there was to be a 'battle'.

In Dundee, the opening of the Coffee Bar provided an opportunity to test this hypothesis of symbolic rather than action structure on a dynamic rather than a static, descriptive level, to observe the development of a 'gang war' from a state of peaceful co-existence - in short,

to observe the complexity of symbolic 'action' validated by unstructured incident. To the police and adults in the neighbourhood, the violence and the graffiti plainly indicated a struggle for supremacy between two 'gangs', the 'Huns' and the 'Tongs', and indeed, this seemed the easiest and most obvious line to take - a direction that had been given 'respectability' by other field workers. But, such a view of an action structure was manifestly at variance with observed 'fact' and, ultimately, obscured the centrality of the symbolic as an explanatory factor in the description of the phenomenon.

However, before attempting to outline the development of this 'confrontation', it is useful to reiterate the point made in the Introduction concerning the public acceptance of a 'gang problem' in Dundee, even more so than in Edinburgh. Dundee, of course, is a smaller city and the local Press usually attempted to reflect an image of a tight-knit 'community', suggesting local solutions to problems and giving considerable space to 'gang' incidents. The most significant article (mentioned in the Introduction) referred to a 'gang glossary' compiled by a Bailie and the Burgh Prosecutor which was recommended to Magistrates, Shopkeepers and Parents as a useful aid in determining 'gang membership' (Dundee Evening Telegraph 28/4/73).

It was in this atmosphere of imputed 'structure' that the Coffee Bar was established in Jute Hill to meet the 'needs' of the local 'gang', the 'Huns'. Indeed, the Press visited the premises and stories appeared hailing the project as an attempt to help youngsters 'who might otherwise be hanging around street corners'.[1]

In fact, on the first night of opening, the Coffee Bar was fairly crowded, with approximately forty teenagers turning up to listen to the records and generally guage the 'atmosphere'. Those present were well-behaved, but it was significant that, even so, certain features of 'ganging' made themselves felt.

1. Note.
As pointed out in the Appendix on Method, for the period of the Dundee research I was employed as a Detached Youth and Community Worker by Dundee Corporation. In this capacity, a major part of my work involved working with 'gangs' and 'unattached youth' seen by the Corporation as a particular 'problem'. The Coffee Bar was set up as an experiment in alternative youth provision in co-operation with students from the University. However, as time went by, the students withdrew from active support, leaving myself as the sole member of 'staff' and thus in an unique position vis-a-vis the 'conflict' that developed between rival 'gangs'.

Almost immediately, those present requested permission to write their names on the walls, perhaps to establish the Coffee Bar as part of their 'territory'. The students running the Bar at the time refused and the result was illicit graffiti. But, more interesting, was the sudden outbreak of mass hysteria when a rumour was passed around that the 'Mid' were coming. Later the same evening, a similar reaction of mass exodus was caused by another rumour that the 'Fleet' were coming.

> "We got our first taste of 'gang' activity with young drunken boys running up and down the street shouting, 'The Mid are coming', and later, 'The Fleet's in Jute Hill'. Nothing happened, <u>but it was the most exciting part of the evening</u>."

A major topic of conversation that evening was a recent 'mobbing and rioting' incident in the city centre, when a Jute Hill boy had allegedly assaulted a policeman with two bottles. The boy who had committed the assault was discussing the likelihood of being 'sent away' and was pleading 'self-defence', since he had no idea that it was a policeman who had jumped on his back.

However, while the general pattern of 'ganging' could be seen through the initial 'tranquillity', it was temporarily relegated to the background by the novelty of the Coffee Bar. But, not for long; almost from the very first evening, some clients resorted to 'horseplay' for amusement - activities such as putting a teaspoon in one's mouth, filling it with saliva, and flicking it across the room (not very pleasant). <u>Boredom was setting in.</u>

> "It is noticeable that the teenagers are starting to get bored with a diet of records and coffee - interest is beginning to turn to other things."

In other words, those present began once more to manufacture their own 'excitement' and the stage was set for the adaptation of the premises to their own, more exciting, purposes. Activity became more destructive and vandalism increased.

> "I left three boys playing darts in the back room and they soon switched their game to aiming at the light bulb, which was inevitably broken to great jubilation."

The differentiation of groups and areas into 'teams' became evident. Several records were stolen and the older Jute Hill boys said knowingly that it must have been the 'Tiny' ('Huns'). In fact, the self-styled 'Young Huns' came in and threw the 'Tiny' out. These latter, incidentally, were to my eyes just a few of the small children that always played in the street outside the building and seized any opportunity to steal items from the Bar.

Again, the fear of other areas concentrated on Menzieshill and the 'Fleet', who were bound to come up because the 'Disc Jockey' worked in that area and must have told the local 'team' about the Coffee Bar. It seemed that there were indeed 'gangs' and that the Coffee Bar was becoming a focus for their activity - a base. On the other hand, there had been no incidents, no clashes with other groups, except in the imagination of the boys themselves. Fate then took a hand with a burst pipe flooding the premises and the development of the project was delayed for a week.

It has already been suggested that the Coffee Bar was becoming a focus for 'gang' activity and this is an important point that must be remembered throughout this discussion. Without the provision of this facility, the various peer groups would have been forced back on to the street corners, since many of the boys were barred from existing youth centres. They would not have had this opportunity to convert symbolic structures into action, even in the limited way that is to be described. To this extent, the resulting events are artificial, except insofar as they reflect the aspirations and hopes of those involved and provide an opportunity to observe a 'gang conflict' that has the possibility of structure readily available and yet still remains unpredictable and spontaneous.

The re-opening of the Coffee Bar signalled the beginning of a gradual slide into open conflict based on 'gang' rivalry. Significantly, the pattern of attendance changed, with the Jute Hill boys tending to become casual visitors and their place taken by a group of 'outsiders'.

> "The whole pattern of attendance seems to have reversed itself. We have the same core group of girls...but the boys have changed. Billy, Roddy and their group have started coming in every night and have changed from 'wrongdoers' to 'model customers'. Moose, Frankie and their crowd ('Huns') now attend only spasmodically and even then look increasingly bored with the whole thing."

Although this smaller group seemed to have adopted the premises as their 'hang-out', the two groups still mixed together in seeming harmony with no mention of the 'Tongs' - the future 'rivals' of the 'Huns'. In fact, field notes recall an animated discussion about 'gangs' between the 'core members' of this 'new' group without any reference to that name - the 'Tongs' did not seem to exist.

> "'Rogey', 'Burkie', Roddy, and the others were having a

heated discussion about 'gangs', but no mention was made of <u>their</u> being in any 'gang'."

But, only two days later, 'Rogey' was suggesting the existence of the 'Tongs' and his 'membership' of that group. The occasion of this revelation was the release of Larry, the 'Leader' of the 'Huns', from prison.

"'Rogey' and the Ferry Bank boys came in and, shortly after, the 'Huns' arrived with Larry, who was the subject of some hero-worship. It was quite obvious that 'Rogey' and Larry pretty well ignored each other and I asked 'Rogey' why. 'Larry's the 'Huns', I'm the Ferry Bank 'Tongs', we dinnae bother each other.'"

After this visit from Larry, who only came two or three times at most, and never became involved in the fighting, the 'Tongs' were increasingly referred to as a 'gang'. In fact, 'Rogey' refused to go on a trip to Aberdeen because he was saving up to have a 'Tongs' jersey made.

"The reason he gave for not wanting to go was that he was having a 'Tongs' jersey made. It was to be red with white stripes on the sleeves. At the moment, 'Roby' is <u>the only one</u> with a jersey, but the others all say that they are going to get one."

Significantly, not one of the boys ever got a jersey. Moreover, 'Roby' proved to be the least involved in 'gang' discussions and incidents, preferring to spend his time with his girl-friend. Indeed, these early discussions about the 'Tongs' were treated with a great deal of humour - the whole affair seemed a light-hearted 'diversion'.

However, unlike the 'Huns', who appeared a diffuse neighbourhood structure, the 'Tongs' claimed a very definite 'leadership', at least in theory. This emerged when a neighbour complained about a slogan, 'Tongs ya bas', sprayed in white paint on his car. 'Rogey' was asked for information, as the most vocal on the subject of the 'Tongs'.

"I'm no the leader, 'Roby' is. Look (pointing to a 'Tongs' slogan and a list of names engraved on the Coffee Bar door) 'Roby's' name is at the top, I'm second....'Burkie's' at the bottom, he's a crapper."

As this 'structure' became more elaborate and the 'gang' began to take shape, at least in 'Rogey's' imagination, discussion began to focus on whether or not the 'Tongs' could 'take the Huns'. This escalation in <u>verbal</u> confrontation was extremely rapid.

"Slightly ominous is the way, since 6th. July, that the 'Tongs' concept has got a grip on the Coffee Bar...While the boys were joking about the formation of the group on

> Monday, 9th. July, to-day, 12th. July, they are now beginning to brag about how they could 'take the Huns'."

But, even at this point of comparing 'strength', it was very noticeable that the two major figures in the 'Huns', Larry and 'Muff', took no interest in the discussion and no attempt was made to involve them. One would have expected some reaction to the insults that were being made by the Ferry Bank boys.

> "While these discussions about strength were going on, Larry and 'Muff' were sitting down quietly playing dominoes."

However, as interest in the rivalry increased, more and more boys became involved and the premises 'buzzed' with excitement. Which 'team' was the 'hardest?' Speculation mounted. In fact, the comments being made were obviously sheer 'fantasy' to everyone except the boys involved, and perhaps even to them.

> "Once again, there was the usual discussion about the relative strength of the two groups. But this time it was more in earnest, with 'Rogey' and Terry going at each other for most of the night with their respective lists of 'gang members'. For every 'hard man' that Terry could summon to fight for the 'Huns', 'Rogey' had a bigger boy at his command."

But, while the increasingly tense atmosphere seemed to suggest a final 'battle' to resolve the issue, the self-styled 'leaders' of the 'Tongs' were fighting it out amongst themselves. 'Roby', who had taken little interest in the whole affair, had a furious verbal 'battle' with 'Rogey', who appeared to be the most involved in the escalation of 'gang' tensions. Carol, 'Roby's'girl-friend, summed it up.

> "It's jealousy - Roby's a better battler."

Out of this confused, unstructured debate, it seemed that some kind of violent clash was inevitable, but, when it came, it merely reflected the symbolic elements of 'leadership' and 'membership' revealed in the hours of rambling discussion that had gone before. There was little evidence of organised, systematic conflict.

Indeed, confrontation so far had been mainly verbal, although its effect was to split the 'clients' of the Coffee Bar into two broad groups, or rather, the main participants in the discussion aligned the 'teams', with little or no reference to the individuals concerned, who sometimes seemed ignorant as to which side they were supposed to be on. Thrasher, of course, suggested the importance of 'threat' for the structure of the 'gang'.[1]

1. H.J. Parker: op. cit. P.144.

> "As Thrasher pointed out long ago, it is at times of threat that the Gang really takes shape. At such times, sub-divisions and personal differences are subsumed by a mass unity against the common enemy."

The suggestion of this paper is that the 'conflict' did not in fact structure the 'gang', give it 'shape', because it never really existed as an entity. Rather, the situation allowed those most heavily involved to suggest with credibility an essentially symbolic structure and to gain reinforcement and confirmation from <u>potential</u> action. This appeared to be the pattern of events at the Coffee Bar, with a spontaneous and unplanned clash being defined <u>after-the-fact</u> as a 'Huns/Tongs' showdown, thus paving the way for further 'action'.

The incident itself scarcely resembled an organised 'battle' between two structured 'gangs'. In fact, it was only by chance that the 'Tongs' became involved through the arrival of 'Rogey' on the scene.

> "I noticed a strange group of boys (revealed later as the 'Young Huns') had come into the Coffee Bar but they seemed to be quite happy listening to the records and talking.... Next second, I was startled by the sound of shouting and swearing....I noticed a chair being thrown out of the door and, looking out, saw Burkie walking up the street with the strangers waving chairs at him. Suddenly, they ran up the street after him and he took to his heels.....
> (<u>Note: no 'gang' conflict</u>)
> Just at that moment, 'Rogey' arrived on the scene. Sizing up the situation, he screamed, 'Tongs, ya bas,' and ran off after them. Immediately, the Ferry Bank boys (who had taken no interest up to this point) streamed out of the Bar and, with a tremendous yelling of 'Tongs' and 'Huns', caught up with the 'Huns' and gave two of them a 'kicking'."

The 'Tongs', triumphant, returned to the Bar, already boasting about their 'victory', conveniently forgetting that Burkie's plight had been ignored until 'Rogey' came on the scene. But then an already confused situation became slightly farcical with the return of the 'victims' to justify their initial assault on Burkie. It was especially interesting that the replay of events was in 'gang' terms, although there was no evidence of any initial 'Huns/Tongs' clash.

> "<u>The Jute Hill version</u> of events was that Burkie had been sitting 'steaming' with a can of beer in his hand..... Apparently, one of the 'Huns' had tried to take his can off him and Burkie had pulled out a 'blade'. <u>According to the 'Tongs'</u>, 'the Huns sterted it by touching Burkie's can.'"

This general talk of justification drifted into discussions of wider 'policy' matters, such as, 'Wha' should come intae Jute Hill,

anyway?' Presumably, the presence of the Ferry Bank boys in the area was seen as a precipitating factor. However, the conclusion reached was that:

> "Ferry Bank and Jute Hill are all the same - <u>the Huns rule.</u>"

In spite of this 'peace treaty', it seemed obvious that the debate would go on, with the 'Huns' nursing a grievance, and the 'Tongs' broadcasting their success. It only remained to be seen whether or not the groups would become more structured and capable of <u>organised</u> action. But one thing was clear - for the 'Tongs' at least, it had been an exciting and profitable evening and they looked forward to a 're-match'.

In fact, it seemed that the final showdown would not be long in coming. The group who had been 'jumped' were the 'Young Huns' and the 'Huns' sought retribution. The major topic of conversation became the restoration of the 'honour' of the 'Huns'.

> "('Muff') The Tongs jumped the Young Huns - we cannae stand fer that; we're no crappers."

'Rogey', who appeared to have supplanted 'Roby' as the 'leader' of the 'Tongs', was not averse to a 're-match'; or so it appeared.

> "I arrived at the Coffee Bar to find 'Rogey' striding off down towards the city centre. I was informed that he was off to get a 'squad' together to fight the 'Huns'..... the numbers around the Bar began to build up and the boys began to arm themselves with an assortment of weapons, ranging from walking sticks to home-made axes."

Indeed, the 'Huns' seemed well-prepared. They even had 'allies' from Charleston to give them 'backing'. However, the Charleston Boys, or the 'Mob', as they called themselves, were none too sure as to the precise purpose of their visit.

> "Talking to the Charleston Boys, it appeared that they knew some of the older boys from Jute Hill and had come to lend a hand in the present 'crisis'. However, they did not seem too certain about what was happening and said they were merely going to 'back the Huns if there was any trouble'."

The atmosphere of excitement, of expectancy, was electric and similar in nature to that noticed by Patrick[1] in the build-up to the clash with the 'Barnes Road'.

> "In this climate of mounting excitement, every boy in the area within the aegis of the 'Fleet' and all other associated gangs had been alerted and told to be armed."

1.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.92.

While the 'Huns' armed themselves, the opportunity was taken to ask 'Muff' (who now appeared as the de facto 'leader' of the 'Huns') the reason for this particular incident and the justification for the heavy armament.

> "'Rogey' challenged us. He said he'd bring his team up tonight, so we're goin' tae be ready. We willnae stert anythin' if they dinna'. Watch those bastards, no us."

Unfortunately, to 'Muff's' consternation, the 'enemy' never arrived and the only casualty turned out to be himself - he was 'lifted by the polis fer loiterin'. The return match therefore had to be postponed, but later events revealed that it had never been organised in the way 'Muff' had suggested.

A major obstacle to the interpretation of this incident as a 'Huns/Tongs' clash, albeit abortive, was the role played by 'Roby', the agreed 'leader' of the 'Tongs', suggested in fact by 'Rogey'. While scouring Jute Hill for the Ferry Bank boys, I met 'Roby', his girl-friend, and some other boys making their way towards the Coffee Bar. They were astonished, and frightened, to be told that 'Muff' and the 'Huns' were waiting for them and they retreated down-town.

> "I met Roby, Carol, Scotty and some other boys. I told them that the 'Huns' were waiting for them. Indeed, Roby, who I thought was the 'leader' of the 'Tongs', seemed in the dark about what was happening."

Their fear was short-lived, however, because they arrived at the Bar again the very next night, although this time as a large group. 'Rogey', showing no embarrassment at his failure to return the previous night, promptly got involved in another argument with the Jute Hill boys.

> "The Ferry Bank boys, reinforced by 'Rogey', Roddy and Billy, arrived at the Coffee Bar....They still acted very much as if they owned the place and still did not concede that the 'Huns' had the upper hand....'Rogey' once again spent half the evening detailing all sorts of boys who would 'back' him. Predictably, this led to arguments, mainly between 'Rogey' and Willie."

It would seem that 'Rogey' had no real 'team' and that his challenge had been mere bluff. Moreover, it is questionable how far the 'Huns' were organised. Their actions seemed more the result of the immediate situation and the spontaneous challenge issued than of any real planning. Even the presence of the 'Mob' may have been fortuitous. Certainly, they never appeared again and may have been merely casual

visitors onto whom the 'alliance' was forced by events and 'Muff's' imagination.

However, one thing is clear, that is, as 'gang warfare', the incident was a fiasco and cannot be taken as indicative of organised, systematic conflict. Even the participants seemed to see it as rather less than total confrontation, since the following night the whole affair seemed to have been forgotten as a basis for action.

But, the debate continued and, verbally at least, the whole chaotic and undirected sequence of events was slowly being redefined in 'gang' terms. Thus, although it has already been pointed out that the observed initial incident bore little relation to any 'gang conflict' and its genesis seemed quite clear (the question of 'self-defence' seeming to hinge on whether taking the can of beer, or pulling out the knife, was regarded as the most important), 'Roby', who had not been involved in any of the 'action', carved a place for himself in the conflict with the following explanation of the initial incident, which was totally at variance with the available 'facts'. In effect, he reached back into history to pre-empt the incident with his own grievance.

> "Apparently the trouble was over a boy called John who had allegedly asked Carol, Roby's girl-friend, for a 'grope'. Thus, Roby, and hence the 'Tongs' were after him. But, according to Roby, although he wanted a 'square-go' with John, 'Muff' was 'buttin' in'."

Even the non-participants were beginning to redefine the clientele of the Coffee Bar in 'gang' terms. Mary asked me who was in the premises in language that was unmistakeable in its imputation of 'structure'.

> "Wha's in tonight - the Tongs or the Huns?"

However, once again, events revealed the contradiction between symbolic and action structure. While the usual debate about relative strength was going on, with all the main participants present, 'Dek' attacked Billy over the question of 'gang membership'. No-one interfered, although the fight was repeated outside. One would have expected those present to take sides over such an issue and 'battle' to commence, but evidently the <u>situation</u> was not appropriate. A possible conclusion might be that, organisation being largely verbal and symbolic, incidents tend to be spontaneous in nature, it being difficult for the unstructured 'gang' to react <u>systematically</u>.

> "I was sitting in the Coffee Bar talking to Billy, 'Rogey' (the mainstay of the 'Tongs'), and Roddy, when suddenly 'Dek' (a Jute Hill boy) came bursting in and, grabbing

> Billy's hair, pulled him to the ground, screaming:
> 'I'm in the Huns, ya cunt!'
> They were separated and then, a few minutes later, Billy had 'Dek' by the hair and was trying to knee him in the face."

This open clash having been ignored by those seemingly most interested in perpetuating the conflict, it was ironic that the very next evening the final clash did take place and in a predictably 'messy' and unstructured fashion. In fact, the actual 'battle' in no way resembled a final confrontation between two well-organised units. The fight itself was mercifully short, though noisy, and preceded by a great deal of argument, leading to the impression that no-one present knew there was going to be a 'battle' - it just happened. The situation was appropriate.

> "The 'Young Huns', who normally do not come to the Coffee Bar, began to argue amongst themselves and with the Ferry Bank boys about the initial incident on Friday, 20th., when two of the 'Huns' were 'jumped'. The boys gathered outside and split up into several groups, hotly debating the aggression of the 'Tongs'."

Significantly, there was no attempt at 'senseless' violence. Rather, each side attempted once again to defend its positionoon the two basic issues - the 'kickin' received by the 'Young Huns' and the 'hardest gang' ('Roby's' explanation had apparently been forgotten). Of course, there were the inevitable lists of 'allies', but an example of the discussion of the first 'issue' is interesting since it suggests rationality and purpose in 'gang' violence - the insistence on 'self-defence'.

> "Rogey ('Tongs'): 'I couldna' let Burkie get a kickin'; I had tae gi' him backin'.
> Willie ('Huns'): 'Burkie pulled a blade on mah wee bruther; he had nae right tae dae that'.
> Roby ('Tongs'): 'Burkie was bein' chased by the Huns: we had tae help him'. (Incidentally, he was not even there.)
> Tom ('Huns'): 'But Burkie sterted it; ye canna' ignore a blade'."

Admittedly, positions were entrenched and the debate was monotonous in its repetition. However, the basic principle of 'self-defence', as also mutual support, is acceptable to the wider society as reason for action and the ensuing behaviour should not therefore be denigrated as 'senseless'. Indeed, with such limited flexibility in argument,

it is scarcely surprising that violence was resorted to as the only way of breaking the deadlock - the final arbiter. They had trapped themselves in a verbal stalemate that could only be resolved by action.

The incident itself was similar to its predecessors in that the two 'teams' did not clash in final battle. In fact, on this occasion, the clash was between mere fragments of the total groups, thus appearing even less organised than the previous abortive showdown, where at least the 'Huns' were present in strength.

> "'Rogey', 'Roby', Roddy and the other mainstays of the Ferry Bank group had eventually wandered off, apparently to try and get reinforcements. At about 9.45p.m., some of them came back down the street from the direction of the Chinese on the corner. There was only a small group, 'Rogey', 'Roby' and Roddy.
> A group of Jute Hill boys, approximately a dozen strong, met them and engaged them in heated conversation..... the incident turned nasty when 'Muff', armed with a plank of wood, came out of the Coffee Bar and went towards the huddle at the top of the road. Next second, there was a loud 'thwack' and the whole street erupted. Bricks and bottles were flying everywhere and the air was filled with abuse and slogans....'Rogey' ran past with his face streaming with blood, hotly pursued by 'Muff' and his 'team'."

While this was going on, the Coffee Bar was used as a shelter by a number of boys from both Jute Hill and Ferry Bank, who obviously wanted no part of the fight. Significantly, several of these boys, including Billy from Ferry Bank, were amongst those who had earlier been arguing on the street. But when the 'victors' returned, boasting about how they had given 'the Tongs a kicking', no attempt was made to involve these 'refugees'.

And so, even on this occasion, neither side was able to effectively organise its 'forces', so laboriously discussed only a short time before. Indeed, even those present felt no compulsion to participate - some did, some conspiciously avoided the 'action'. Even so, the incident was regarded by all as a 'gang fight', won on this occasion by the 'Huns'. In all probability, the incidents continued, the pattern having now been set and a new 'mythology' created. But the Coffee Bar was removed from the situation, its function as a focus for 'action' having now become unacceptable, even in terms of unstructured youth work.

Conclusion.

The 'reality' that has emerged is not of a structured response to the material circumstance dominating the boys' lives (as suggested in part in Chapter One) but of a largely symbolic response bolstered by

occasional, spasmodic, disorganised incident. This is not to say that the lads were unconcerned with 'structure'. On the contrary, as the preceding discussion shows, some went to great lengths to suggest the 'gang' as a genuine vehicle for action. However, in spite of the efforts of this over-enthusiastic minority, the incidents that did occur showed little sign of any persistent and enduring 'gang conflict'. Moreover, this failure to convert a verbal into an action structure occurred in a situation that seemed ideally suited to such 'escalation' - the presence of the Coffee Bar with its 'permissive' staffing and the existence of an embryonic conflict in the shape of 'rival' groupings from Ferry Bank and Jute Hill.

On the basis of the foregoing static and dynamic descriptions of 'ganging' as observed in Edinburgh and Dundee, it seems reasonable to conclude that such 'structure' that did exist was symbolic and verbal rather than actual - the systematic 'ganging' suggested by the media and the courts was not in evidence. However, this is not to undermine the theoretical importance of the phenomenon; it remains no less 'interesting' in spite of its less than grave implications for the safety of the 'public' in the areas discussed. Thus, the next chapter will attempt to relate the empirical discovery of a symbolic rather than an action structure to the earlier suggestion of the need for a 'cultural analysis'. The result will be a view of 'ganging' based on symbolic adaptation in the context of a contemporary view of adolescence as a 'liminal' period in which symbol predominates.

CHAPTER SIX.

SYMBOLISM: ADOLESCENCE AND THE MEANING OF 'GANGING'.

Having outlined an empirical view of the 'gang' as essentially a symbolic rather than an action structure, it now becomes necessary to relate this finding to the suggestion in an earlier chapter of 'culture' as consisting of both 'material' and 'expressive' elements. It is intended to discuss the phenomenon of 'ganging' in the context of 'expressive culture' and, in particular, in relation to the general area of adolescent symbolism. However, there is a further purpose and that is the use of such a discussion to elaborate on the theoretical necessity for a view of 'culture' in both its 'material' and 'expressive' elements if valid explanations and descriptions of social man are to be achieved.

Moreover, before entering into a specific discussion of symbolic structures in adolescence, it is necessary to reiterate in general terms the centrality of symbolism in any analysis of 'culture' and also to elaborate further the particular view of symbol suggested in this study, as well as the 'redefinition' of certain key concepts, such as 'myth', 'symbol' and 'ritual'.

Symbolism: A Theoretical Approach.

As with other aspects of man's complex interrelationship with his social and material environment, 'symbolism' has suffered as the 'positivist' sociologist searched for a 'science of society'.[1] The centrality of symbolic structures as a means of 'unifying' the diversity of the social structure, as well as of allowing the human subject to impose meaning on potentially determining 'material' situations, has suffered under the onslaught of 'quantification'.

> "...the great sociologists, and the sociologists who have followed in their footsteps, have tended to emphasise the rational and the contractual and to minimise the significance of the symbolic in the structure of modern industrial society."

Indeed, this process of exclusion was inevitable given the emphasis on directly observable phenomena and the studied avoidance of aspects of social life that could not readily be rendered open to 'objective' study. Thus, social anthropology may assert the significance of symbol in the maintenance of social structure, but modern,

1.Abner Cohen: Two Dimensional Man: op. cit. P.52.

rational, industrial man has cast off the trappings of 'myth' and 'ritual'.

The result of this process, as has already been outlined in earlier chapters, was a view of man in society that emphasised 'structure' and crept inexorably towards a deterministic view of constraining factors. Quite simply, they studied only one half of the social equation and thus were really unable to account for the diversity of man, his 'disturbing' freedom to ignore what should be determining factors, to overturn the 'explanations' of the sociolog-ist. In terms of the view of 'culture' presented in this study, they emphasised 'material culture', the means for the transmission of structure, to the exclusion of 'expressive culture', the means of adaptation to, of negotiation with, objective structures. (Of course, the interrelationship between 'material' and 'expressive' culture has also been suggested: see Chapter 3). Thus, the centrality of the symbolic system must be stated unambigiously.[1]

> "What we are confronted with is a whole way of life inter-penetrated by a whole symbolic system, not a series of discrete bits of behaviour alongside a series of discrete cultural artefacts.....Positivism, limited as it is to the surface of things, the manifest and the misleading.. can only give us the shapes of all the jig-saw pieces, never the picture on them."

Indeed, the significance of symbol can be taken further and suggested as being crucial to both 'stability' and change in society. While it might with justification be suggested that, in one sense, 'stability' requires the elaboration of structure, the erection of social 'systems' (e.g. employment structures, educational and polit-ical systems etc.) to govern the relations between men with vastly differing interests and the 'material' adaptations accompanying these material conditions, the 'contradictions' inherent in such a situat-ion of continuing inequality, of domination and subordination, of 'exploitation', would constantly threaten disruption were it not for the parallel existence of 'anti-structure', of symbolic 'systems' with the prime purpose not only of unifying the several discrete 'material' cultures (or 'classes') always in some tension with each other, if only potentially, but also of softening the effects of 'repression'. Victor Turner points out the relationship of 'structure'

1.P. Willis:'Symbolism and Practice':CCCS Paper 13 P.6.

and 'anti-structure', though he does not go so far as to suggest 'symbolism' as synonymous with 'anti-structure'.[1]

> "Man is both a structural and an anti-structural entity, who grows through anti-structure and conserves through structure."

Symbolic structures, however, do not only unify and take the 'sting' out of repression; they may also contain the potential for non-revolutionary change in the flexibility that they offer to structure. Thus, man is able to adapt to 'contradictions' in the social structure, to devise 'solutions' that may exist only at the symbolic level, but which may pass from the realm of 'anti-structure' to that of 'structure'. In the symbolic universe, new adaptations to the underlying material conditions on which the social structure is built may arise and become increasingly accepted as a 'solution' to manifest 'contradiction'. At some stage, dependent of course on the general acceptance of the symbolic adaptation, it may pass into the realm of 'structure' ('material culture') and itself become the target for symbolic attention. Inevitably, many symbolic adaptations, or 'solutions', remain at the 'expressive' level and for a variety of reasons are not accepted into the realm of 'structure' as a continuing adaptation. Nevertheless, it is important to understand this process of a dialectical relationship between 'structure' and 'anti-structure', or 'material' and 'expressive' culture.

Indeed, the mere suggestion of 'symbol' as something more than an anthropological 'device' brings its prevalence in contemporary society to our attention. Speech, for example, is not a mere system of sounds but the foundation of the symbolic structure.[2]

> "A common speech form transmits much more than words; it transmits a hidden baggage of shared assumptions."

Language is the prime form of symbolic communication - each word potentially carries a series of meanings. In fact, a consideration of language reveals the unchallenged hegemony of symbol over communication.[3]

> "Symbols are the only means of communication. They are the only means of expressing value; the main instruments of thought, the only regulators of experience. For any communication to take place, the symbols must be structured."

1. V. Turner: Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: P.298 Cornell University Press. 1974.
2. Mary Douglas: Implicit Meanings: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1975 P.177.
3. Mary Douglas: Natural Symbols: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd: 2nd. Ed. 1973 P.60.

This 'hegemony' is based on the symbol as a system of shared meanings. Symbol is important precisely because it provides a basis for meaningful interaction. Without symbol, even at the basic level of language, society as an operational entity would simply fall apart, as Durkheim astutely observed.[1]

> ".....without symbols, social sentiments could have only a precarious existence....
> Thus social life, in all its aspects and in every period of its history, is made possible only by a vast symbolism."

Symbol then, on one level, provides the base for a 'collective consciousness', for the unity of the system based on 'shared meanings'. However, as already suggested, a parallel purpose is the mediation of 'contradictions' present in an imperfect and objectively 'unjust' class structure. In this regard, it is interesting that symbolic adaptations exist even in the fundamental area of speech, which might have been assumed to be the least likely area for adaptation because of its universal nature - its embrace of all sections of the 'class' structure. Thus, Mary Douglas suggests a valid relationship between Basil Bernstein's speech 'codes'[2] and the division of labour.[3]

> "It is essential to realise that the elaborated code is a product of the division of labour....The demands of the industrial system are pressing hard now upon education to produce more and more verbally articulate people....By inference, the restricted code will be found where these pressures are weakest."

Unfortunately, Douglas does not develop the idea of speech 'codes' as symbolic negotiations of particular 'class' situations on a 'material' level.[4] Nor does she suggest the parallel 'function' of speech as a general symbolic structure drawing together the 'class structure'. Indeed, the existence of a common language as a system of shared assumptions is essential to the elaboration of further symbolic structures. Speech is the key to the transmission of 'shared images' and also to the articulation of local adaptations. Indeed, a common language is the basic 'shared image' underpinning society.

Symbol then is engaged in a complex and continuing dialectic with 'structure' in the interests of both stability and change, as 'expressive' and 'material' culture. For this reason, it must be returned to

1. E. Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: P.231 2nd. Ed. 1976 Allen & Unwin Ltd.
2. B. Bernstein: Class, Codes and Control: Vol.1 1971 Routledge & Kegan Paul.
3. M. Douglas: Natural Symbols: op. cit. P.44.
4. See Chapter 3 for discussion of language and 'culture'.

the centre of the social stage - to do otherwise is to risk a partial explanation of social behaviour. It is interesting that the anthropologist has for a long time been asserting the centrality of symbol as a 'unifying' element in society, in particular, as a factor in imposing meaning on 'contradiction'.[1]

> "Indeed, one often finds in human cultures that structural contradictions, asymmetries and anomalies are overlaid by layers of myth, ritual and symbol, which stress the axiomatic value of key structural principles with regard to the very situations where these appear to be most inoperative." (My emphasis)

It is not difficult to relate Turner's suggestion to the persistence of 'conformity' in the class structure of contemporary British society. Indeed, Anthropology must be turned to for more than the occasional insight; basic concepts such as 'myth', 'symbol' and 'ritual' have been developed mainly in this field and their use in this study must inevitably lean heavily on 'anthropological' definition.

While it is not intended to dwell in great detail on the definition of these concepts, it might prove useful to locate them in the theoretical view of symbolic structure outlined above. A cautionary note must be sounded as to the initial origin of these concepts, that is, in simple, homogeneous rather than differentiated, industrial societies. To some extent, therefore, they must be adapted to suit this different context. This adaptation will consist mainly of a certain amount of de-formalisation to fit in with the relative scarcity of formal 'ritual' (for example, initiation rites) in contemporary society, which does not treat the individual's social development as a series of structured 'stages' to be passed through with the aid of elaborate 'ritual'.

Thus, for the anthropologist,[2] the definition of the term 'symbol' is closely linked to his field situation in which, traditionally, formal 'ritual' abounds. The emphasis tends to be on 'ritual symbols' and their rigorous definition.[3]

1. V. Turner: The Ritual Process: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1969 P.47.
2. For definitions of 'myth' and 'ritual' see also: R.A. Georges (Ed.) Studies on Mythology: Irwin Dorsey Ltd. Nobleton Ont. 1968/Monika Vizedom: Rites & Relationships: Rites of Passage and Contemporary Anthropology: 1976 Beverly Hills, Sage: Sage Research Paper in Social Sciences/Cross Cultural Studies Series 4.
3. V. Turner: The Forest of Symbols: Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1967 P.28.

> "The simplest property (of ritual symbols) is that of condensation. Many things and actions are represented in a single formation. Secondly, a dominant symbol is a unification of disparate significata...The third important property of dominant ritual symbols is polarization of meaning....At the sensory pole are concentrated those significata that may be expected to arouse desires and feelings; at the ideological pole one finds an arrangement of norms and values that guide and control persons as members of social groups and categories."

Such a view of 'symbol' may be too rigorous and specific for the purpose of this study but, nevertheless, the properties of 'condensation' and the 'unification of disparate significata' are useful, though not necessarily in the context of 'ritual'. Similarly, the idea of 'symbol' as initiating social action, again from the anthropological concern with 'ritual', is perhaps limiting and requires attention.[1]

> "Since I regard cultural symbols including ritual symbols as originating in and sustaining processes involving temporal changes in social relations and not as timeless entities, I have tried to treat the crucial properties of ritual symbols as being involved in these dynamic developments. Symbols instigate social action." (My emphasis)

An alternative view would be that in contemporary British society where formal 'ritual' has become relatively rare as a mechanism for 'processing' individuals through a series of changes in social position, a broader view of 'symbol' is required. This definition would accept the essential properties of symbols, that is, 'condensation' and 'the unification of disparate significata' in particular, and place them in a general context of meaning. Abner Cohen seems to follow this direction in his definition of 'symbols'.[2]

> "Symbols are objects, acts, relationships or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings, evoke emotions and impel man to action."

However, he accepts a crucial point that emerged originally out of 'ritual' as a formalised process of transition. Thus, where Turner talks of symbols as 'instigating social action', Cohen suggests that they 'impel man to action'. This view is too limited and causal for our purposes. In the context of formal 'ritual', certainly the symbol may instigate action, but in the absence of 'ritual', it may merely establish the potential for action or it may simply exist as meaning.

The essential view of 'symbol' then is not of an 'action' structure, but as a 'mechanism' for meaning, without formal commitment. Thus,

1.V. Turner: Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: op. cit. P.55.
2.Abner Cohen: op. cit. P.23.

while the 'Ndembu' studied by Turner may see symbol as an action imperative, the lower-class adolescent of this study may simply see it as meaning, as a way of adapting constraining factors to his own purposes. Mary Douglas implies this broader view.[1]

> "The drawing of symbolic lines and boundaries is a way of bringing order into experience. Such non-verbal symbols are capable of creating a structure of meanings in which individuals can relate to one another and realise their own ultimate purposes." (My emphasis)

Thus, 'symbol' can be generalised by minimising its formal aspects and stressing its ability to convey meaning through its properties of 'condensation' and 'association'. 'Ritual', on the other hand, would seem to have little relevance in its 'anthropological' sense.[2]

> "By ritual I mean prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to mystical beings or powers."

Certainly, 'the performance of ritual as distinct phases in the social processes',[3] would appear of little use in an analysis of contemporary symbolic structures. However, if the sacred 'functions' of 'ritual' are discarded, and the term generalised, it can perhaps be used as another element in the area of communication, itself the preserve of 'symbol'. Thus, 'rituals' can 'pass on' messages about the state of the world - they can act as a factor in 'stability'.[4]

> "Rituals function to encode messages about the nature of the world and the actor's relationship to it, about definitions and interrelations."

'Rituals' can be taken to be those routinized acts which assist the 'smooth running' of society. Thus, while 'symbols' have the potential to create meaning, 'rituals' allow us an 'unquestioned' meaning. Indeed, a symbolic adaptation, once an attempt to impose meaning, may collapse into 'ritual' when its original purpose is forgotten or outmoded. In this regard, Abner Cohen may be correct when he suggests the relevance of 'power' to 'ritual'. As a symbolic adaptation devoid of its original meaning, it becomes the mere creature of the existing relationships between 'material cultures'.[5]

1. Mary Douglas: Natural Symbols: op. cit. P.73.
2. V. Turner: The Forest of Symbols: op. cit. P.19.
3. Ibid. P.20.
4. M. G. Silverman: 'Maximise Your Options: A Study in Values, Symbols and Social Structure': P.109 in R.F. Spencer (Ed.) Forms of Symbolic Action: 1970 University of Washington Press.
5. Abner Cohen: op. cit. P.135.

> "People engage in ritual and ceremony to derive comfort, perform a social obligation, achieve recreation, discover their identity, pass the time, be with others, and for an endless variety of other private purposes. But, quite apart from these purposes, these patterns of behaviour affect and are affected by relations of power between individuals and groups."

However, while 'symbol' and 'ritual' have been 'generalised' in order to facilitate their usefulness in the study of a complex industrial, rather than a primitive homogeneous, society, the concept of 'myth' needs little amendment, though perhaps slight 'trivialisation'. Indeed, the 'anthropological' view of 'myth' suits the purposes of this study admirably.[1]

> "...the function of myth is to portray the contradictions in the basic premises of the culture. The same goes for the relation of myth to social reality. The myth is a contemplation of the unsatisfactory compromises which, after all, compose social life."

Of course, the universal, persistent myth, common in tribal society and adhered to as an 'explanation' or 'validation' of the social structure, is not really relevant to contemporary 'myth' in industrial societies. Nevertheless, the <u>definition</u> of 'myth' requires little, if any, alteration to fit into a pattern of 'expressive culture', of symbolism as <u>meaning</u>.[2]

> "Symbolic narratives, in short, represent cultural models for coping with typical patterns of subjective stress involved in the orientation of individuals to problematic situations in their social and cultural orders."

In short, 'myth', 'symbol' and 'ritual' can all be loosely defined as 'mechanisms' directed at the development of <u>meaning</u>. The more problematic the social situation, the more one might expect the raising of a symbolic universe using these 'mechanisms' to adapt and give meaning to the situation. To these concepts, however, must be added a new creation, that is, '<u>style</u>'. The use of 'style' as an analytical tool has become established[3] and must, like the other concepts, be integrated into a view of 'expressive culture'.

In many ways, 'style' can be regarded as an '<u>action myth</u>'; it is a 'symbolic narrative' expressed in 'action' rather than through speech. Like 'myth', it is concerned with portraying the cultural 'contradictions' in society and is rooted in 'history'.[4]

1. Mary Douglas: <u>Implicit Meanings</u>: op. cit. P.156.
2. T.S. Turner: 'Oedipus.....': P.36 in R. Spencer (Ed.): op. cit.
3. See work of <u>Centre for Contemporary Cult. Studies</u> (Bibliography)
4. J. Clarke & T. Jefferson: P.152 in Mungham & Pearson: op. cit.

> "...our notion of style is one of 'moments' when, temporarily, the social formation, and the position of a specific group within it, becomes crystallised in specific symbolic systems which express its experiences of that formation."

Again, 'style' leans heavily on the capacity of symbols to 'condense' references and convey meaning through the reorganisation of already existing elements. It is truly symbolic because it does not create systems from nothing, but instead transforms and rearranges the existent to give new meaning.[1]

> "The generation of subcultural styles, then, involves differential selection from within the matrix of the existent. What happens is not the creation of objects and meanings from nothing, but rather the <u>transformation</u> and <u>re-arrangement</u> of what is given (and 'borrowed') into a pattern which carries a new meaning, its <u>translation</u> to a new context and its <u>adaptation</u>."

Its symbolic 'pedigree' established, 'style' must be rejected as the ideal, or even the best, approach to symbolic structures in contemporary British society. Some limitations of detail have already been indicated in the earlier chapter on 'culture' (Chapter 3), but there are further difficulties in the concept as it stands, centring mainly around its place in the analysis of symbolic structures. Of course, an obvious comment is that 'style' as developed so far[2] has concentrated on the area of 'youth' as the main location of emergent adaptations. This necessarily casts doubt on its <u>general</u> usefulness.

However, more important, is the implicit assumption, sometimes revealed explicitly, that 'style' is the sum total of 'cultural symbolization'.[3]

> "We believe that one area which could help with these theoretical gaps (in existing subcultural theory)....<u>is the area of 'cultural symbolization' or style</u>. A look at culture simply through activities, attitudes, interests and values ....remains superficial so long as it ignores cultural symbols since, for us, such symbols....are attempts by people to make meaningful, at the cultural level, their social reality." (My emphasis)

The suggestion of this paper would be that such an attempt to confine symbol to the area of 'style' is unduly limiting. It is true that 'style' is <u>one method</u> of imposing meaning on 'contradiction', of adapting to an unsatisfactory and potentially determining social

1. J. Clarke: 'Style': P.178 in Hall & Jefferson: <u>Resistance Through Rituals</u>: op. cit.
2. In the work of the <u>Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies</u>, Univ. of Birmingham.
3. J. Clarke & T. Jefferson: 'The Politics of Popular Culture: Cultures and Subcultures': <u>CCCS Paper 14</u> P.2.

situation, but such a limitation ignores, for example, symbolic structures as 'shared images' unifying the objectively 'repressive' class structure. It further neglects the possibility of other symbolic adaptations within the class structure that may bear little relation to 'style' - for example, the phenomenon of 'ganging'.

Thus, before moving on to a discussion of symbol in the specific context of adolescence, it is necessary to state clearly the crucial role of culture as a 'material/expressive' dialectic in any view of the social structure. On various levels, ranging from 'images' shared by the whole society, to adaptations within and to particular 'material cultures', it serves as an 'unifying' mechanism, either directly, as in the case of 'shared images', or indirectly, through the raising of adaptations and negotiations to take the consciousness of 'repression' out of an objectively repressive material circumstance.

Symbol in the Context of Adolescence.

The stage is now set for the consideration of the centrality of symbol in adolescence and, in particular, the place of the 'gang' as a symbolic adaptation to both the general pressures of adolescence and the particular constraints operating in a lower class context. Here again, in terms of the basic issues of this paper, it is necessary to 'integrate' the lower class adolescent into a 'total' view of society. Only by so doing can his behaviour be judged rational and purposeful. Thus, the working class 'gang member' must first be located in a general context of adolescence before the discussion is focussed on his particular situation.

With this in mind, adolescence in contemporary British society can fruitfully be regarded as a period of exclusion and of re-integration. The explanation of this paradox is crucial to any discussion of adolescent symbolism, since in terms of the arguments of this paper, 'total' exclusion clashes with the maintenance of an overall stability. Thus, the term 'exclusion' is used in the 'anthropological' sense of 'ritual' exclusion as a means to ultimate re-integration, not in the 'radical' sense of 'oppression'.[1]

> "The years then, between the achievement of adult states and motives, and the achievement of the normative and structural outlets for these impulses, represent to some

1. P. Willis: 'Social Practice and Expressive Symbolism': P.35 in K. Blaukopf & D. Mark (Eds.): The Cultural Behaviour of Youth: 1976 Universal Edition, Vienna.

extent a time of cultural oppression and exclusion."
(My emphasis)

It is suggested that any over-simplified discussion of adolescence in terms of 'repression' and 'exclusion' superficially removes it from the social structure and consigns it to an 'unreal' position outside society. Adolescence does not exist only within the class structure, to be dealt with exclusively in terms of relations of power, a youthful mirror of the adult conflict between classes. On the contrary, like family and kinship structures, adolescence presents an enduring problematic to the stability of society - it must be 'integrated' into the overall structure and become part of that symbolic overview 'uniting' the various 'material cultures'.

Once again, anthropology provides the basic concepts on which to build such a view of adolescence in contemporary British society. While it must be reiterated that symbolic structures tend to be more 'formalized' in simple societies and can form an imperative for action, rather than exist at the level of meaning alone, this reservation cannot be an excuse for the dismissal of insights applicable to the contemporary situation. Thus, a discussion of Victor Turner's concepts of 'liminality' and 'communitas' readily reveals a more 'integrated' view of the 'exclusion' of adolescence in modern Britain.

'Liminality' for Turner is, of course, bound up with 'ritual' in the 'anthropological' sense of 'transition rites'.[1]

> "Liminality is...'transition rites' - which accompany every change of state or social position, or certain points in age. These ('rites') are marked by three phases: separation, margin....and re-aggregation."

Thus, in 'primitive' society, the adolescent might pass through formal 'transition rites' in order to become an adult.[2] Obviously, this formality does not exist to-day in industrial Britain and he must pass through the interim of 'liminality' without the benefit of 'ritual' to ease his passage. However, the absence of 'ritual' does not deny the prevalence of symbol in this state, particularly when Turner's suggestions of 'outsiderhood' and 'structural inferiority' as similar

1. V. Turner: Dramas, Fields & Metaphors: op. cit. P.231.
2. Note. Transition without formal rites is not uncommon even in more 'primitive' societies. Monika Vizedom (Rites & Relationships: op. cit.) found that (P.21) '..many primitive societies on the American Plains or in the Philippines' had no rites. Moreover, (P.155) effecting transitions by ritual means was most characteristic of 'closed' rather than 'open' societies - possibly because discomfort involved in rites requires high degree of 'material' and 'psychological support' (P.30.).

points of concentration for the symbolic are considered.[1]

> "Three aspects of culture seemed to me to be exceptionally well-endowed with ritual symbols and beliefs of a non-structured type. These may be described respectively as liminality, outsiderhood and structural inferiority."

Certainly, the contemporary adolescent is treated as both 'outside' the adult world and in a position of 'structural inferiority' in that his views and actions are regarded as not yet 'adult' or 'mature'. These two factors, combine with his 'liminality', not child/not adult, to make his position one of 'exclusion' from the major structural arrangements of society. For the lower-class boy on a Scottish housing estate, no less than for the Ndembu boy studied by Turner, adolescence is an uncertain period, a stage of transition, though the latter is assisted through his 'insecurities' by a complex system of 'ritual'.

However, adolescence is not simply 'exclusion', 'liminality' has a wider purpose to be found in 'communitas'. This concept is a recognition of the enduring ideological struggle between the two major views of society - society as an inequitable class structure and society as an 'undifferentiated whole', presumably based on 'equality'. Turner suggests that these two views co-exist in all societies as a point of 'contrast'.[2]

> "Implicitly or explicitly, in societies of all levels of complexity, a contrast is posited between the notion of society as a differentiated, segmented system of structural positions....and society as a homogeneous, undifferentiated <u>whole</u>."

This view fits in nicely with the suggestion that contemporary British society consists of objective inequality overlaid by a symbolic 'consensus', with 'Marxists' and 'Structural-Functionalists' operating choice with regard to these two factors rather than attempting a synthesis. Their contrasting viewpoints could be said to be the <u>theoretical equivalent</u> of the social 'contrast' between equality and inequality.

However, Turner's central point is that, in 'liminal' states, or periods of transition, this 'contrast' is 'activated' through 'communitas'. In other words, notions of equality and non-differentiation come to the fore in 'liminality'.[3]

> "In rites of passage, novices or initiands pass from one

1.V. Turner: <u>Dramas, Fields and Metaphors</u>: op. cit. P.231.
2.Ibid. P.237.
3.Ibid. P.202.

> position or condition of structure to another. But in the passage from structure to structure, they may, and usually do, if the rites are collective in character, experience communitas."

Thus, if adolescence is regarded as a 'liminal' period, a period of transition, the adolescent in a sense <u>experiences</u> the ideological contrast between equality and inequality. Removed from the wider social processes, he is able to contemplate, from the 'outside' as it were, existing social conditions. The bind of structure is weakened to allow a consideration of 'alternatives', at least potentially.

On one level, this feeling or state of 'communitas' is expressed in a diffuse comradeship, an emphasis on <u>personal</u> relationships with those in a similar 'liminal' state. Hence the adolescent concentration on 'mates', on being 'in', on having a 'satisfactory' circle of 'friends'.[1]

> "In liminality, communitas tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transition ....Communitas is spontaneous, immediate, concrete."

This heightened interest in personal relationships within the age group, on being 'acceptable' to friends rather than parents and other 'outsiders', is illustrated in the empirical importance of the peer group and the accepted, almost 'institutionalised', tension between parental aspirations and demands and the pressures to conform to 'teenage standards'. However, this pressure to 'communitas' is not one-sided. It can be argued that parents <u>expect</u> an emphasis on peer relationships as part of 'growing up'. Certainly, parents become as disturbed over teenage children who stay in all the time, as they do with regard to the independent soul who would appear to have entirely cast off the shackles of parental authority.

A 'retreat' into the peer group and the increased value placed on 'satisfactory' personal relationships are expected <u>by both sides</u> as a 'natural' expression of adolescence. Likewise, the teenage 'obsession' with the present, the <u>immediate</u> satisfaction of their demands. It is evident that a great deal of parental persuasion is directed, in all 'classes', at persuading recalcitrant children to delay gratification, 'to make the most of themselves'. Indeed, it is sometimes suggested that the adolescent unwillingness to 'wait' is somehow a cause for concern - perhaps irrational. On the contrary, it might be suggested that, as

1. Ibid. P.274.

with the primacy of personal relationships, this is yet another example of 'communitas'.[1]

> "Communitas is of the <u>now</u>: structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future through language, law and custom.....the collective dimensions, communitas and structure, are to be found at all stages and levels of culture and society."

Thus, on a superficial level, adolescence can be seen as a period of 'exclusion' without the trappings of 'ritual' to assist re-integration. In this 'liminal' period, or state of transition, the 'universal' preoccupation with equality and inequality, with structure and 'anti-structure', rises to the surface of social relationships in 'communitas', that is, a concern with the absence of structure, with people <u>as people</u>, rather than as hierarchical beings.

However, there is another aspect of 'communitas' that has not yet been considered, namely, the extension of the 'structure/anti-structure' dichotomy. In other words, society exists as an objectively repressive set of social relations, with a 'class structure' based on relations of domination and subordination. But this structure, as suggested by Turner, is not the only, or the ideal method of social organisation; it is always in some tension with 'anti-structure', where all men should be equal and power irrelevant. A cursory glance at politics on a global basis will reveal this never-ending dialectic between the two views of man. There is, and always has been, an ideological 'struggle' between man as 'free' social being and man as the 'creature' of the structures <u>he creates</u>.

In a period of transition, such as adolescence, it is suggested that to a greater or lesser degree this conflict comes to the fore - 'communitas' allows it expression. The subject, temporarily 'forced' from his position in society, is able to contemplate existing social arrangements critically, at least symbolically.[2]

> "(In liminal phases)...we find social relationships simplified, while myth and ritual are elaborated. That this is so is really quite simple to understand: if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, <u>it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs</u>." (My emphasis)

Certainly, there is no lack of impressionistic evidence to suggest that adolescents are somewhat critical of existing social arrangements.

1.V. Turner: <u>The Ritual Process</u>: op. cit. P.113.
2.Ibid. P.167.

For example, witness the recurrent dissatisfaction with adult assertions that certain rules and modes of behaviour are above criticism - to the adolescent, they are just 'old-fashioned'. At the other extreme, of course, can be suggested the student tendency to move into 'radical politics'. These examples are not intended to be objective, solid evidence of a critical view of the social structure generally held by adolescents. However, it can perhaps be asserted with some safety that the teenage population is stereotyped as, or more significantly, expected to be, concerned with 'novelty' and 'fashion' in the various layers of social life, extending from dress and music to politics.

The important point is that, in a class structure based on inequality and exploitation, such as exists in contemporary British society, the views of adolescents tend to revolve around the opposite pole to 'structure' and 'conformity'. In a symbolic sense at least, the major categories of culture are worked on, developed, and ultimately passed on through myth, symbol and ritual.[1]

> "In this no-place and no-time that resists classification (liminal time), the major classifications and categories of the culture emerge within the integuments of myth, symbol and ritual."

It has been suggested that adults in a sense condone these 'liberties' as the vagaries of youth and inexperience - 'after all, you're only young once' - and this 'acceptance' is significant as an expression of the relationship of 'liminality' and 'communitas' to structure. In short, 'anti-structure', or 'communitas', exists within structure. Adolescence is a period of transition and 'exclusion' but within the 'hegemony' of the total society. Indeed, it is suggested that the contemplation of 'alternatives', of 'communitas', is encouraged as a reinforcement of the existent. Thus, adolescents are viewed tolerantly in their experimentation with social 'reality', but all parties realise that it is only a temporary phase and the 'guardians of structure' are watchful lest this process of limited 'freedom' go too far. Hence, the often-observed obsession with youth, with their behaviour, their excesses, their 'styles'. Youth is accepted as a period of experimentation, but not of change. In 'growing up', the adolescent must come to realise the 'natural order', that is, existing structures. In short, freedom just will not work. Certainly, when he tries it, it brings nothing but 'trouble' in the shape of clashes with parents, teachers, the police

1.V. Turner: Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: op. cit. P.257.

and other authority figures.[1]

> "In this interim of 'liminality', the possibility exists of standing aside not only from one's own social position, but from all social positions, and of formulating a potentially unlimited series of alternative social arrangements. That this danger is recognised in all tolerably orderly societies is made evident by the proliferation of taboos that hedge in and constrain those on whom the normative structure loses its grip."

Adolescence is manifestly a period of transition. Equally obviously, it is a time of relative freedom from the burdens of society. One is neither child nor adult but this has its advantages since one does not have to suffer the indignities of childhood or the responsibilities of being adult. A general comparison with more primitive societies suggests the validity of the concept of 'communitas' as, on one level, an emphasis on personal relationships and, on another more profound level, a 'contemplation' of existing structures. However, this 'contemplation' is not 'radical', that is, based on change, but rather an opportunity to view 'alternatives' with a view to their ultimate dismissal as unrealistic. In a sense, the preoccupation with novelty, the questioning nature of adolescence, is useful as a factor in stability simply because potential 'solutions' are adolescent. The adult is adult partially because of his acceptance of existing structures; he has likewise passed through the 'scepticism' of adolescence and come to recognise it as 'part of growing up'.

In short, there is a core of beliefs, corresponding to the 'key images' suggested earlier as part of the symbolic structure holding together the diversity of society, which ultimately cannot be questioned. The adolescent may toy with 'alternatives' in his 'liminal' context but ultimately he must come to realise their transitory nature when faced with the full weight of social pressures to 'grow up'.[2]

> "The central cluster of nonlogical sacra is then the symbolic template of the whole system of beliefs and values in a given culture, its archetypal paradigm and ultimate measure."

'Exclusion' then is part of a wider process of 'integration'; the adolescent is 'free' only to see the 'weakness' of 'alternatives' to the existing order. To a great extent, his adaptations and 'solutions' (whether as 'Teds', 'Rockers', 'Mods', 'Skinheads' or 'Punks') are symbolic simply because they can never be anything else. Certainly,

1. Ibid. PP.13/14.
2. V. Turner: The Forest of Symbols: op. cit. P.108.

'real' change can only be expected in a period of 'real exclusion! Adolescent exclusion on the contrary is not total but designed, as in more 'primitive' societies, to confirm the existing order. Contemporary society has perhaps cast off the shackles of 'ritual', but it cannot ignore the 'problem' of adolescence, the transition from boyhood to manhood, and the solutions it has adopted are not dissimilar to those of simpler societies - the general pattern of controlled 'exclusion' and re-affirmation of position is much the same.

Interestingly, (again using anthropological sources) in more 'primitive' societies, bodily changes (circumcision/scarification) and/or changes in capabilities (through reading sacred texts or tests through ordeals) act as 'mediating events' which allow the 'authorities' to accept changes in social status outside the ritual. These visible changes in the initiand facilitate his entry into adult status.[1]

> "These actual changes in the ritual field are the mediating events which allow the authorities....to accept a change outside the ritual field."

The question that this raises for contemporary society is that, lacking such 'visible' signs of maturity, how do we confer or recognise adult status? What 'changes' do we accept as evidence of maturity? This is a complex issue subsumed under the diffuse symbolic cluster of 'growing up'. We tend to talk loosely of 'settling down', of coming to terms with 'responsibility', of 'appropriate' behaviour. Adult 'responsibility' tends to be equated with regular employment, marriage and children, and 'experience'. Where the adolescent tends towards 'innovation', the adult relies on 'commonsense' and 'experience'. This fits in with the evidence of earlier chapters[2] with regard to maturation - there is an emphasis throughout adolescence and extending into maturity on 'acting your age'. The lads were very quick to 'label' as a 'wee laddie' those of their peers who dropped out of step; just as they tended to 'hang about' on the street corner together, so they tended to 'court' a 'steady' girl friend and take on 'responsibility' together. In short, the symbolic process of 'settling down' as a pressure to 'maturity' must not be under-estimated. The adult has 'settled down' in a diffuse cluster of ways difficult to define, but which mark him off clearly from the 'liminality' and 'freedoms' of adolescence. Moreover, this process coincides with and marks the end of a transition

1. Monika Vizedom: Rites & Relationships: op. cit. P.51.
2. See Chapter 3.

from the asexual state of 'child' into the sexual world of the adult, a transition which for most makes the responsibilities of wife and family a distinct and immediate possibility.

This essentially symbolic view of adolescence and the passage to 'maturity' operates for the working class adolescent as well as for his middle class counterpart - both must pass through adolescence ultimately to become 'adult'. However, the general process with its emphasis on the mainly symbolic critique of the existing order is mediated by particular material circumstance. Thus, for the working class adolescent, relative disadvantage accentuates his concentration on leisure, on making the most of that period of relative freedom between leaving school and taking on the responsibilities of a family. Unlike the middle class adolescent, the way is not laid out as a series of gradual steps upwards to 'success', or rather, relative success. The teenage years are not a platform to the acquisition of qualifications and a 'career'. His future has been decided long ago in his early rejection of the 'middle class' institution of the school and his 'acceptance' of a life of 'labour'. As the 'radical' theorist suggests, the experience of adolescence must be mediated by the particular 'class' situation or, in the terms of this paper, by the differential 'material' conditions and the corresponding cultural adaptation on a 'material' level. For the lower class adolescent, this means that the difficulties and advantages of adolescence are felt more keenly. Thus, 'exclusion' and a sense of 'inferiority', of 'outsiderhood', are more evident in his case, while the 'freedoms' of a transitional state are more readily exploited. For him, the process of adolescence is indeed an uncertain experience that reinforces his structural constraints and in turn is reinforced by them.

On a general level, an area of central importance is the struggle for 'identity' on the large housing estates that have resulted from the extensive redevelopment that is still in progress today. Of course, in part adolescence itself is a search for 'identity', for recognition as a full 'member' of society, an 'adult'. It might be expected then that redevelopment, the break-up of 'communities', would make the acquisition of a social 'identity' more important - and difficult.

Certainly, in the present study, the phenomenon of 'ganging' was found to exist mainly on the large, anonymous, and peripheral housing estates of large cities. Even Jute Hill in Dundee, though not in this

category, was an area in the process of redevelopment; the boarded-up streets signalled the break-up of a 'community'. James Patrick too[1] found a concentration of 'gangs' on the housing estates surrounding Glasgow, or in areas in the process of redevelopment. This is further supported by Clarke with regard to the 'skinheads'.[2]

> "It is noticeable that areas where skinhead gangs became most prominent were typically either new council housing estates or old estates, being either redeveloped or experiencing an influx of outsiders."

The crucial difficulty it would seem is the absence in such areas of a 'neighbourhood identity', or indeed, any real knowledge of 'traditional' community. However, before elaborating on the difficulties of the subjects with regard to a 'neighbourhood identity', it is necessary to outline the essential meaning that I attach to 'community'. In a sense, this is a misleading concept if viewed in ideal terms, that is, the 'traditional' working class community as <u>the way</u> for the working classes to live and relate to each other. The use of 'community' in this 'political' sense has marred the work of 'radical' theorists; they tend to see 'community' as <u>either</u> the 'traditional' state to which we must return if 'practical solutions' are ever to be offered to the 'problems' of working class existence <u>or as</u> a 'sounding board' against which ideas such as 'alienation', 'deprivation' and 'anonymity' can be 'tested' - in short, 'community' is equated with the 'traditional' working class community of terraced houses and the extended family.

In this study, however, 'community' is taken to be quite simply a <u>group identity</u> - 'we' as opposed to 'I'. It is accepted that the 'traditional' working class community is not necessarily the 'ideal' form of social organization on the large housing estates described in the first chapter. Moreover, it must be pointed out that many of these council housing areas were built before the 2nd. World War and time has brought about <u>deterioration</u> rather than a <u>regeneration</u> of 'community spirit'. It may well be that empirical attention should be directed at the <u>public/private dichotomy</u> associated with tenancy rather than at the perhaps 'utopian' resurrection of 'traditional' relationships. Perhaps indeed, the many technological and social changes of this century have overtaken this concept as a realistic method of social organization. Whatever the final outcome of this debate, while it is accepted

1.J. Patrick: op. cit.
2.J. Clarke:'Football Hooliganism & the Skinheads':<u>CCCS Paper 42</u> P.13.

that those living in these areas may also bemoan the passing of 'neighbourhood spirit' and their lamentations may affect the boys' assessment of their group 'identity', the preoccupation in this section is with 'community' merely as a manifestation of a group 'identity' rather than any particular kind of 'community'.

Thus, few of the boys had moved into the housing estates very recently. Most had either been born on the estate or moved in when they were very young. Most did not, therefore, have a 'reality' of 'traditional' community in their immediate past against which to measure their present 'predicament'. Like the 'skinheads', at most they only had an 'image' of 'community'.[1]

> "...the skinheads had to use an image of what the working class community was as the basis of their style....they received a tradition which had been deprived of its real social bases. The themes and imagery still persisted, but the reality was in a state of decline and disappearance."

Parents might bemoan the loneliness and isolation, the lack of 'neighbourliness' on the estate, and compare it with the 'old days', but, for their children, life on the estate was the reality, their experience of 'community'. In this respect, the emphasis on 'territory' among lower class adolescents on the housing estates might be seen as a symbolic attempt to create 'community', to establish 'boundaries' based on 'we', the insiders, versus 'them', the outsiders.[2]

> "The emphasis on teritory is a crucial one, and the 'mob' may be viewed as an attempt to retrieve the disappearing sense of community."

It has already been suggested in an earlier chapter that the concept of 'gang territory' does not exist as an action structure. Rather, it can be explained as an attempt, on a symbolic level, to define the boundaries of 'community', to establish an 'identity' that might compensate for the failure of the adult population to re-build a 'community' in the traditional sense. Again, the 'gang' might be fruitfully seen as a symbolic attempt to defend this space, as well as the supplier of a 'group identity'.

This view of a struggle for 'identity', for a sense of 'community' - for a 'neighbourhood' context - is supported by the emphasis in the estates studied on the continuing development of a sense of 'history'.

1. J. Clarke: 'The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community': P.100 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance through Rituals: op. cit.
2. J. Clarke & T. Jefferson: 'Working Class Youth Cultures': PP.154/5 in Mungham & Pearson (Eds.) op. cit.

Redevelopment had in a sense destroyed the past or at least rendered irrelevant the individual recollection of 'community history'. The adolescent population in particular was placed in a state of 'limbo'- since a sense of present 'identity' is dependent on past experience, the absence of 'history' left them without 'identity'. Hence considerable energy was, and is, devoted to the development of a 'local history', if only in the symbolic context of the 'gang'. For example, areas were graded according to their assumed past 'history' of violence, which significantly always exceeded present experience. For the symbolic present to appear more 'real', the 'past' must be exaggerated. Whilst there are limits to the exaggeration of the present, where 'reality' is too evident, a violent 'past' can rub off a little reflected glory.

> "(Paul - talking about the Douglas estate) 'It's no the same now as when I was young; things have really quietened doon. They're jest wee laddies.'"

On one level then, the pressures of adolescence combine with the destruction of 'community' and the failure to create an alternative group 'identity' based on the fact of tenancy to make imperative the search for a corporate 'identity'. The question that is asked in this context is not, 'who am I?', but, 'who are we?' In the pursuit of 'We', the lower class adolescent attempts to create a past for his present situation and lays out symbolic boundaries within which such a group 'identity' can develop, if only potentially and as a symbolic structure. Comments such as Jimmy's -

> "I remember the night the Jacobites came doon...that field o'er there was black wi' battles. The polis were everywhere. It's nae like that any mair."

- cannot be dismissed as mere 'fantasy' but are rather an attempt to retrieve a 'past' bulldozed out of existence and never re-built; a 'history' against which the 'present' can be compared and developed; a local 'identity' - for example, we are the 'Terror', if nothing else.

However, while generally the pressures of adolescence are mediated by the objective existence of large, uncaring, 'deed' housing estates which are, for many, 'places to live', contrasting rather 'painfully' with the 'ideal' of a living, sharing 'community' in the 'traditional' sense, the lower class adolescent has other constraints which he must either adapt to or transform. Again, his concern is with the establishment of an 'identity', but this 'identity' is not that of a truncated,

distorted 'community' - 'we are' - but that of a meaningful, purposeful view of 'self'. The location of this struggle is not the 'estate' versus the 'town' but, to a great extent, the 'street corner' within the estate.

The location of activity on the 'corner' is not in itself significant as a factor in the creation of 'meaning'. However, the monotony of the 'streets' is emphasised and transformed into a deprivation by the importance of leisure for the working class adolescent which, as has been suggested, is related to the withdrawal of interest from the work situation.[1]

> "The rigours of work are not forgotten when the indulgences of leisure begin. But the 'relative freedom' of leisure has allowed a displacement of central class concerns and values, developed in work, to the symbolic activities of the leisure sphere."

The emphasis on leisure is in turn frustrated by its actual experience on the streets of the large housing estates - 'doing nothing' is the main activity. Generally, the 'reality' of working class leisure has been depicted as consistently monotonous and routine by several writers in a variety of contexts. For example, Bloch and Niederhoffer conceded the centrality of 'boredom' rather than violence amongst 'gang members' even in the 1950's.[2]

> "Actually, the average gang existence follows a fairly monotonous routine...Night after night, gangs can be found at the same street corner hang-out. Weekend nights may bring a slight variation. They may grace a dance or a movie...This is life in the gang. The fighting, burglaries, delinquency, are a very small part of the total range."

Again, it would seem that the more contemporary 'gang member' faces a similar situation, as James Patrick records.[3]

> "One of the foremost sensations that remains with me is the feeling of unending boredom, of crushing tedium, of listening hour after hour at street corners to desultory conversation and indiscriminate grumbling."

Most significant is the suggestion by Corrigan, endorsed by the boys in this study, as described earlier, that 'doing nothing' is not confined to 'gangs', but is the major leisure activity for most lower class adolescents.[4]

1. J. Clarke: P.176 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance through Rituals: op. cit.
2. H.A. Bloch & A. Niederhoffer: The Gang: A Study in Adolescent Behaviour: 1958 New York Philosophical Library: P.177.
3. J. Patrick: op. cit. P.80.
4. P. Corrigan: 'Doing Nothing': P.103 in Hall & Jefferson: Resistance Through Rituals: op. cit.

> "For most kids, where it's at is the streets, not the romantic, action-packed streets of the ghetto but the wet pavements of Wigan, Shepherd's Bush and Sunderland. The major activity in this venue, the main action of British Subculture is, in fact, 'doing nothing'."

The lower class adolescent then finds himself limited in education (from which he has largely withdrawn interest), work and leisure. Whichever way he turns, he finds himself disadvantaged in the struggle to impose meaning on his social situation. He is left, potentially, with nothing except 'self' and the 'extension of self'. The only materials at hand from which to build 'identity' are, and can only be, symbolic, the 're-organisation' of existing, largely determining elements.[1]

> "My contention is that to lads traditionally lacking in status and being further deprived of what little they possessed....there remained only the self, the cultural extension of the self (dress, personal appearance) and the social extension of the self (the group)."

It is in this context that 'sounding' and insults can be seen as an attempt to develop 'self' as 'identity'.[2] As was suggested earlier, language is a symbolic structure, capable of creating meaning. In his restricted situation, on the 'corner', the lower class adolescent emphasises symbolic forms of language, such as 'sounding', insults, laughter and jokes, to develop his only real resource - SELF.[3]

Thus, insults can serve both to establish one's own position and also the position of the other, the 'insulted'. His reaction will say a lot about both his position and the position of 'self' with regard to that position.[4]

> "In any culture, insulting terms are the most illuminating indication of accepted values. In the heat of a dispute a man has recourse to standardized expressions which are hurtful just because they carry the strongest implications of contempt which the symbolism of the culture is capable of concentrating into a word or a phrase." (My emphasis)

Similarly, laughter and jokes encourage the spirit of 'oneness',

1. T. Jefferson: 'The Teds, A Political Resurrection': CCCS Paper 22.
2. For example see: D. Matza: 'The Nature of Delinquent Commitment': P.239 in M. Rubington & E. Weinberg: Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective: 1968 MacMillan.
3. See: P. Willis: Learning to Labour: op. cit. P.29 for the importance of the 'laff' in 'counter-school culture'/P.125 for the importance of 'lively' language as 'deflection' of monotony.
4. Mary Douglas: Implicit Meanings: op. cit. P.12.

of group identity as an extension of 'self'. Hence the importance on the street corner of 'playing around', 'acting the fool', 'having a good laugh'. The resulting release of tension serves to draw the group into a feeling of unity, of 'identity', of 'communitas'.[1]

> "Laughter and jokes, since they attack classification and hierarchy, are obviously apt symbols for expressing community in this sense (of 'communitas', as outlined earlier) of unhierarchised, undifferentiated social relations."

Having considered adolescence as a period of 'exclusion' embracing the total 'class structure', as a 'liminal' state potentially rich in symbol, and having further elaborated the particular restricted situation of many lower class adolescents which forces them back on their own resources, on 'self', in an attempt to overcome the difficulties and freedoms of adolescence, the background has now been laid for a consideration of the 'gang' as a symbolic mediation of these general and particular constraints, as an attempt to impose meaning.

In a sense, the 'gang' is an amalgam of 'myth' and 'style', containing elements of both in a pattern that fits somewhere between the traditional, prevailing 'myth' of tribal society and the transitory, historically-located 'style' of contemporary youth 'subcultures'. Thus, the 'gang' provides a 'style', a way of directing behaviour, but without the cultural artefacts of dress and music. In the groups observed in this study, there was no real attempt to adopt a 'uniform', though individuals suggested this as an 'ideal'. On the whole, especially in Dundee, patterns of dress and music 'fitted in' with those held during the prolonged exit of 'skinhead fashion'. (This distinction between 'skinhead' fashion and 'style' is important because in the areas studied the symbolic adaptation was not as 'skinheads').

As 'style', the 'gang' consisted of a diffuse set of symbolic guidelines for behaviour, such as, 'looking after your mates', the preservation of 'territory', the necessity of at least appearing 'hard', and so on. However, as suggested earlier, 'style' overlaps 'myth' - both are 'symbolic narratives' either articulating or defusing 'contradictions' within the existing social structure. This is never more the case than with the 'gang' which, it is suggested, does not just provide a 'style', a mode of behaviour, but largely confines this 'style' to the symbolic arena, lacking the more concrete expression in dress and music of the 'mods' and the 'skinheads'. The distinction between 'myth'

1. Ibid. P.104.

as a largely verbal resolution of 'contradiction', and 'style' as a similar resolution, but through the re-organisation of existing cultural artefacts - a visible 'myth' - is thus narrowed to the point of confusion. In short, the 'gang' has been shown to exist mainly in the verbal symbolism of the street corner rather than in action. Thus, both the projected 'style' of the 'gang' as an imperative to 'action' or, at least, potential action, and the 'mythical' purpose of the 'gang' as an explanation of, or a deflection from, 'reality', merge in the desultory conversation of the streets. Only occasionally do they separate in isolated incidents which serve both to validate the 'gang' as 'style' and reinforce its usefulness as 'myth'.

It has been suggested that 'ganging' occurs in a context of contemporary adolescence as 'liminality' without 'ritual' mediated by a wide range of potentially restricting constraints and emphasised by unrealistically high aspirations, especially in the area of leisure. It is in this context of the potential loss of 'identity' and purpose that the 'gang' as an instrument of 'terror' must be located. Turner has suggested that the transitional state of adolescence loosens the hold of conventional 'norms' in order to allow a contemplation of existing structures. 'Communitas' is a state of limited flexibility aimed ultimately at re-integration, in 'primitive' society through 'ritual', in contemporary, industrial society through the process of 'maturation', experienced as an increasing pressure to 'grow up'. A further suggestion is that, in this context of 'liminality', the re-organisation of existing elements into 'monsters' or 'dragons' can increase awareness of the existent.[1]

> "(Talking about 'masks') Elements are withdrawn from their usual settings and combined with one another in a totally unique configuration, the monster or dragon. Monsters startle neophytes into thinking about objects, persons, relationships, and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted."

It is suggested here that the 'gang' emphasis on 'terror' and 'violence', as expressed in names such as 'Mental Drylaw', 'Terror', 'Huns' and 'Tongs', as well as in the use of 'dramatic' language, is just such an extraction and re-organisation of existing elements to create a clearer 'style' or 'myth'. 'Mental', 'Terror', 'Huns', and like terms, are all found in different contexts without the alarming images of group violence conjured up by their use in 'ganging'.

1.V. Turner: The Forest of Symbols: op. cit. P.105.

Similarly, chants, such as, 'we're no mental, we're insane', are a simple re-organisation of already-existing terms into symbols of 'terror', of potential violence - a symbolic re-working of language to create interest.

But, the choice of such terms, the construction of, in one sense, an essentially verbal world of violence, must not be seen as mere 'fantasy'; rather, it is a means by which 'reality' can be made meaningful, a 'reality' to which it is intimately connected. Thus, this 'awesome' world of violence, potential rather than actual, is a superficial covering hiding a re-organisation of the existent in order to adapt to 'contradiction' and 'repression'. For example, the basic 'structures' of the 'gang' such as 'looking after your mates', the defence of 'territory', 'membership', 'ritual aggression', and so on, have all been empirically demonstrated as existing, in less dramatic form, in the 'parent culture', or working class 'material culture'. They can be interpreted as mere extensions of 'community' and 'toughness'.

In other words, the 'gang' takes the 'material' values of the working class, eroded, if not destroyed, by redevelopment and the 'consumer society', and reinstates them symbolically. On the large council housing estates and in those areas in the process of being torn down, it is obvious to all that the 'interest' of the planners has destroyed the past and especially 'community' and its retrieval will be long in coming. It is left to the 'liminality' of adolescence to experience these deprivations most acutely and to elaborate possible 'solutions'. The result is that in many areas 'ganging' has emerged as a 'satisfactory' symbolic mediation of the real absence of these 'values' in the existing social situation.

On another level, it was suggested earlier that formal ritual is largely absent from modern industrial society, certainly as a means of 'processing' the individual from one stage in life to the next (e.g. from adolescence to maturity). However, in a sense, the 'violence' and 'confrontations' of the lads can be seen as a substitute for this deficiency. 'Squaring-up', 'gang slogans', 'territorial warfare' - all have a ritual content and provide occasions when feelings of identity can be heightened and made explicit. In fact, the 'gang', its name, its alleged symbols, might in one sense be seen as 'collective representations' of the lads' concern with their identity and their cultural ideals. The incidents, however irregular and disorganized, provide an

opportunity for the creative experience of a group solidarity that is not possible in the everyday monotony of the large housing estate. In the general conflict, and especially in the occasional incident, reputations are made and relations between adjacent groups maintained. In effect, a 'ritual' pattern of relationships is set up based on creativity and identity rather than on the potential monotony and anonymity of the material conditions of the boys' lives.

Once born, 'ganging' may have been transmitted in the same way as the symbolic adaptations of the 'mod' and 'skinhead' - as 'style'. Although lacking the cultural artefacts, such as dress and music, capable of easy commercialisation and dissemination, the symbolic violence of the 'gang' may have acted as its own propagandist through the media (see Introduction) to encourage its adoption in other areas, perhaps facing similar problems of redevelopment and 'deprivation', but perhaps not. As 'style', the 'gang' was capable of spreading out from its initial origins. Thus, other areas, and this was noted in the present study, may adopt 'ganging' for its thrill and excitement rather than for its capacity to transform constraints. For example, one branch of the 'Jungle' existed in a middle class area with none of the problems of Barrackhill or Harrytown.

This ease of transmission can perhaps be located, not in the emphasis in the 'gang' on mutual support and group identity, which are directly related to the destruction of these values in the working class 'community', but in the covering of extremity overlaying this simple re-assertion of 'traditional' ideals. The symbolic emphasis on 'violence', on 'terror', gives the 'gang' the edge over other possible adaptations as a meaningful 'solution' to the problems of the lower-class adolescent on the housing estate. Like Turner's 'monsters' and 'dragons', the creation of this 'awesome' world thrusts the 'gang' forward as a powerful focus for 'identity'.

Folklore, or local 'history', served to overlay the practical (albeit symbolic) reassertion of a disappearing identity with 'excitement' and 'mystery', to convey an image of power through 'terror'. Certainly, in most 'gangs', considerable stress was laid on bolstering up the central concepts with 'terrible' stories and threats of dire punishment for breaking unwritten rules. For example, Jimmy emphasised the existence of the 'Terror' with the following tale of mutilation.

> "They used tae gae roond cuttin' awf boys' noses if they didnae dae what they were telt. One boy had a fire

extinguisher put in each ear an' they were both turned on."

This attempt to elaborate codes of behaviour based on 'violence' was sometimes almost comic in its self-delusion, as in the following example of an incident in a 'pub'. Pat's friends were upset when, after finishing his drink, he put his glass upside down on the table.

> "They telt me that turnin' yer glass upside doon is a challenge that ye can beat the best man in the bar. They made me turn it back o'er straight away."

In fact, at no time during the research was there any evidence to support this 'rule'. It appeared simply as an attempt to elaborate on the existing symbolic emphasis on 'violence' as a means to 'identity'.

However, this eternal weaving of stories of 'madness' and aggression could not completely transcend a 'reality' of monotony and 'doing nothing'. Isolated incidents did occur and reinforced to some degree the wilder assertions of the 'gang', but the need still existed for 'action'. A discussion of the 'gang' as symbolic mediation is not complete without some suggestion as to how the boys overcame the enduring 'contradiction' between their verbal machinations and the reality of non-action. The solution to this dilemma is found in the concept of 'rumour', as outlined by Stan Cohen.[1]

> "Rumour, then, substitutes for news when institutional channels fail...In constructing rumours, only those items consonant with the mood are selected. The participants seek a justification for their action and the rumours provide the 'facts' to sanction what the crowd wanted to do anyway."

However, 'rumour' is suggested not only as a justification, but also as a substitute for action. Thus, on occasions, the 'gang' might hear a 'rumour' that there was to be a 'battle' in a certain place, or that a rival 'gang' was coming into their area, and react accordingly, as in the following example.

> "Word spread that the 'Fleet' were in Jute Hill and there was a mass exodus (from the Coffee Bar) in search of the 'action'. (This happened twice in one night.)"

'Rumour' is therefore not only used to 'justify' potentially indefensible action, such as 'beating up' a boy because it was 'rumoured' that he was in another 'gang', as a framework into which 'reality' can be consigned to validate action. It can also serve a much wider purpose as a substitute for action. Thus, the boys were always alert

1.S. Cohen: Folk Devils and Moral Panics: PP. 154/5: London, McGibbon & Kee: 1972.

to possible incursions into their 'territory', to possible showdowns. Usually, as illustrated in the chapter on 'The Gang in Action', these never occurred, but they were an effective source of mobilization, of reinforcement of symbolic 'structure'.

'Rumour' then, is the final element in the intricate symbolic structure known as the 'gang', a 'structure' so complex that it contains symbolic action. The persistence of 'ganging' is not surprising when it so neatly contains its own validation. Certainly, as a symbolic mediation of the deprivations hemming in the lower class boy, already in the 'liminal' state of adolescence, it is indeed a potent adaptation.

In summary, it is suggested that the 'gang' is best described as a symbolic attempt to impose meaning on particular repressions in a 'material' situation potentially damaging to 'identity'. This adaptation must be related to the position of adolescence in contemporary British society as a transitional state divested of formal ritual but serving the same purpose as in 'primitive' society of loosening the 'bind' of existing social structure in order ultimately to re-incorporate the individual more firmly in the existing order. Any other view, based for example on 'subcultural' explanation, has difficulty in one way or another in locating the 'gang' in the total social structure as it is transmitted through 'material' and 'expressive' culture.

The Scottish Context.

This chapter has suggested the centrality of symbol in contemporary British society, particularly in the 'liminal' period of adolescence. Moreover, particular attention has been paid to the relationship between symbolic adaptation and underlying material/cultural conditions. In this regard, the discussion of the Areas in Chapter 1 attempted to convey some impression of the conditions existing at the time of the research - the circumstance to which 'material culture' had to provide an ongoing, generational adaptation and to which 'expressive culture' offered the potential of meaning and 'transcendence'. On a local level, then, 'ganging' can be seen as a response to these conditions - as an attempt to create 'innovation' and 'spontaneity' out of monotony and disadvantage.

However, before concluding this thesis, a final issue remains to be explored, namely, the apparent greater incidence of 'ganging'

in cities north of the Border. Certainly, as the Introduction implies, it figures more prominently as an area of public concern - the 'Glasgow Gangs' are nationally famous - or infamous. Again, as far as the Social/Youth Services are concerned, there appears to be a consensus that 'gangs' are a particular 'problem' in the major Scottish cities. Bearing in mind the conceptual framework of 'culture' suggested in this thesis, and particularly, the suggested relationship between symbolic adaptation and contemporary cultural/material conditions, some attempt must be made to suggest features of the Scottish context that make the symbolic adaptation of the 'gang' more attractive as a symbolic option.

In attempting to answer this question, it should be pointed out that any discussion must necessarily be tentative and based on limited evidence. Any adequate description of the structural differences between Scotland and England would require a more detailed and historical approach than this work can provide. However, if the exploratory nature of the argument is accepted, it might be useful to outline some areas of differential circumstance in employment, housing, education and leisure. Of course, generally, there is an awareness that there is more to the division between the two countries than mere geography - the Scottish 'tradition' has resulted in a range of different interests and priorities, for example, the continuing influence of religion.[1]

> "Scotland is divided from England not just by geography but by a whole host of interests....As we have seen, one is the Roman Catholic Church, in membership twice as strong in Scotland as in England."

More specifically, and a continuing source of concern to politicians on both sides of the border, is the persistently high degree of unemployment in Scotland relative to the United Kingdom in general and England in particular, although in recent years the rates have been converging. Thus, the Department of Employment Gazette (Dec. 1974) reveals that between 1955 and 1974 (and probably further back in time) Scottish unemployment for males and females has consistently been significantly higher (and often more than double) than the rate for the U.K. as a whole. In 1955, male and female unemployment (not seasonally adjusted) in the U.K. was 1.0%, while in Scotland, it was 2.3%. In

1. J.G. Kellas & P. Fotheringham: 'The Political Behaviour of the Working Class': in Alan A. Maclaren (Ed.): Social Class in Scotland: Past and Present: John Donald Ltd. 1976 P.147.

November 1974, this trend persisted, with a U.K. rate for male and female unemployment of 2.7% and a Scottish rate of 4.0%. In the period 1955-74, the peak month for unemployment was January 1972, at which time the U.K. had a male and female rate of 4.1% and Scotland, 7.1%. For males, the % rates were, of course, significantly higher, but they followed the same trend of approximately double the U.K. rate. Thus, in February 1972, the peak period for male unemployment during the research, male unemployment in Scotland was 12.3% (not seasonally adjusted) and in the U.K., 5.6%.

With these continuing differences in unemployment rates, it is not unreasonable to suggest that a feature of the Scottish context is, and has been, relatively high unemployment, especially in the large council housing areas of the major cities. Moreover, as pointed out in the first chapter, in the case of young people, this is compounded by the continuing trend of increasing disadvantage with regard to employment.[1]

> "Unemployment among young people has risen three times as fast as unemployment among the working population as a whole...There has also been a sharp increase in the duration of unemployment for young people."

A further point to be considered is that it is not young people in general who are most threatened by unemployment. As unemployment continues to rise, it has a differential impact, affecting most severely those young people who have few, or no, qualifications, that is, lads such as 'Rogey', 'Roby', Pat and Johnny, all of whom left school as soon as possible to enter the labour market with no skills and no qualifications.[2]

> "The impact of unemployment is most severe on those young people who have few or no qualifications....Moreover, when there is a high level of unemployment, people with poor qualifications encounter increased competition for jobs from those of higher ability and with better qualifications." (My emphasis)

Even if the national unemployment situation eases, (an unlikely possibility), the boys in this study will continue to suffer relative disadvantage, not only because of their youth and lack of qualifications, but also because they exist in a Scottish rather than an English context. Again, another factor that must be taken into account is the higher expectations of contemporary youth, nourished by the blandishments of the advertising media and given substance by the fact of the relative affluence of youth. Thus, using 1947 as the base

1. Manpower Services Comm.: Young People & Work: HMSO May 1977.
2. Ibid. P.17.

-100, the index of hourly earnings of manual workers for the British girl in 1968 was 404 and for the boy, 472. By contrast, the figure from the same base was 350 for a working woman and 361 for a working man.[1] It is not unreasonable to expect unemployment to be more keenly experienced in a context of general 'affluence' and greater expectations than in a climate of high unemployment and low income.

Unemployment, of course, was shown in the first chapter to be a continuing difficulty in Edinburgh and Dundee, especially for young people. Moreover, high rates of unemployment were found to be associated with council housing estates rather than with areas dominated by private housing. In fact, the tendency to build large numbers of council houses is a feature of housing in Scotland, where owner occupiers are significantly fewer than in England.[2]

> "Almost 50% of people in England and Wales owned or were buying their own homes in 1966; in Scotland the proportion was 28%. Conversely, 47% of Scottish households were living in council housing compared to 27% in England and in Wales."

However, the significance of council development in Scotland lies not in the sheer number of dwellings built but in the manner of their location. Thus, the overwhelming tendency has been to concentrate development in often massive, drab and anonymous housing estates which effectively segregate the 'classes'. Since owner-occupiers tend to be middle class and council house tenants working class, Scottish cities tend to be physically divided along 'class' lines. In fact, it was shown in the chapter on the 'Areas' that entire wards were almost exclusively composed of council housing. Thus, the sheer scale and type of council building in Scotland has resulted in the de facto creation of working and middle class areas.[3]

> "The marked segregation of Scottish cities into council estates (working class) and middle class areas has grown more evident since the 1950's. This is as true of Edinburgh and Aberdeen as it is of Glasgow and Dundee."

However, the effects of this pattern of development are not confined to the concentration of the working classes and, consequently, unemployment; another allied point is the unintended effect on education. Thus, the introduction of a comprehensive system along territorial

1. Department of Employment: (1971) British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968: London H.M.S.O. PP.110-119.
2. J.C. Kellas & P. Fotheringham quoting from 1966 Sample Census, Summary Tables No. 11. P.158 in Maclaren (Ed.): op. cit.
3. Ibid. P.147.

lines has tended to 'harden' this separation of the classes or, in the terms of this paper, to structure differential material circumstance for different sections of the population. Indeed, it is ironic that an educational system designed to improve 'equality' of opportunity should in fact increase the disadvantage of the working classes and strengthen the relative position of the 'material' adaptation of 'dissociation' from the intellectual and the academic in favour of a concentration on the physical and the immediate - the middle class institution of the school becomes even more 'alien' and 'irrelevant' in the context of a 'systematic' concentration and 'isolation' of the working class.[1]

> "To compound this polarisation (of working class and middle class housing), comprehensive education along territorial lines further restricts the movement of that part of the working class which used to be 'creamed off' to the selective secondary schools to mix with the middle class."

On a general level, the Scottish 'tradition' in education has always been a potent force in the schools. Briefly, this interpreted 'education' as an emphasis on control, discipline and class learning rather than a consideration of the individual as the unit of learning.[2]

> "In the immediate post-war years, the Scottish tradition in education was a potent influence in most schools. Control was strict, corporal punishment by no means unknown. Thorough class teaching of comprehensive schemes of work had priority over group and individual methods."

As late as 1965, the Scottish Education Department[3] was trying to effect a change away from the 'teacher-dominated, curriculum-centred education' favoured by the traditionalists towards a 'child-centred education'. The entrenchment of the Scottish 'tradition' of education is perhaps indicated by the paradoxical recognition of the S.E.D. as a 'progressive' force in change by the authors of the Dundee Educational Priority Report[4] - it is more usual for government departments to be seen reacting against change.

In fact, even in 1971, the S.E.D. was pointing out the continuing lack of communication between the home and the school, a fact which points up the 'dissociation' of the working class family from the educational system. It is hardly surprising, bearing in mind the pattern of housing prevalent in Scottish cities, that there should be a continuing absence of communication between the middle class dominated

1.Ibid. P.147.
2.C. Morrison et al: E.P.A.: A Scottish Study: op. cit. P.20.
3.Ibid. P.72: S.E.D.: Primary Education in Scotland: 1965.
4.Ibid.

educational institutions and their working class 'clients'.[1]

> "In 1971 the Scottish Education Department.....was still being forced to conclude: 'Although liaison between home and school is gradually improving over the country as a whole, much requires to be done before relations are as close or as fruitful as they should be.....'"

However, having suggested the links between unemployment, council house development and education along territorial lines, it is perhaps useful to outline in slightly more detail the basis of the 'Scottish tradition' in education. What is it in the Scottish 'system' that has resulted in a 'traditionalism' so entrenched that neither the Scottish Education Department nor the Educational Priority Project could succeed in making any great strides in introducing 'progressive' education? Indeed, the project team in Dundee was forced to concede a practical defeat.[2]

> "What it ignores is the strength of establishment pressures to allow the traditional teacher/pupil relationship to remain fundamentally unchanged. To challenge that was well beyond the power of this project at least." (My emphasis)

This 'establishment pressure' finds its philosophical roots in the continuing respect for 'intellect' and the belief in the right of any 'lad o' pairts' to succeed in obtaining the highest honours in the educational system.[3] In practice, this meant an emphasis on 'knowledge and formal systems of learning' and a dismissal of 'learning by discovery' and other modern methods as 'a waste of time'.[4]

> "In a system designed to cultivate excellence at higher levels, anything which is not seen as overtly directed towards this goal tends to be discounted."

In fact, so prevalent was this belief in 'excellence' that, as the E.P.A. Report points out,[5] the S.E.D. was forced to warn against it as an obstacle to change. But this elevation of the 'intellect' had another practical effect discovered by the E.P.A. Report in a national survey of teachers' attitudes. The 'attitude' of teachers in Dundee towards the 'disadvantaged' and 'less able' emerged as significantly different and less favourable than their English counterparts working in similar areas.[6]

Obviously, in a situation of concentrated working class residence, there is an immediate 'contradiction' between the aim of 'excellence'

1.C. Morrison et al: op. cit. P.72.
2.Ibid. P.73.
3.Ibid. P.170.
4.Ibid. P.171.
5.Ibid.
6.Ibid. P.170.

and the reality of teaching large numbers of the 'less able' and the 'disadvantaged' - often a synonym in educational circles for working class pupils. It would seem likely that the extent of working class 'withdrawal' from educational ideals would be increased by 'traditional' methods based on 'intellect' and 'achievement'. In this respect, 'education' may have a differential impact in Scotland as a structural element in material circumstance. Though, ideally, all education is aimed at 'achievement', the entrenched 'traditionalism' in the Scottish system may increase deprivation and 'dissociation' from the school rather than encourage universal 'success'.

A final point with regard to education is that under the Scottish system, the school is responsible directly to the Education Committee through the Director of Education. In England, on the other hand, the school (at least nominally) comes under a Board of Managers. The net result of this difference in 'accountability' is that in Scotland the Headteacher is both 'formally and actually the key figure' in the school.[1] He alone is responsible for 'contact with outside forces' and can mediate all 'progressive' influences. With the background of 'traditionalism' suggested above as prevailing in Scotland, it is quite possible and frequent for the Headteacher to 'represent a very conservative, and at the same time, very dominant, force within the school.'[2] It is not surprising, therefore, that educational 'reform' has taken, and is taking, such a long time to filter through into the Scottish classroom.

However, as well as suggesting a differential material circumstance in the Scottish context with regard to employment, housing, and education, an allied and significant element is that of leisure. It has already been pointed out in an earlier chapter that redevelopment not only broke up 'traditional' communities, it also resulted in the centralisation of leisure facilities. Moreover, the location of the main commercial attractions in the central area was paralleled by a dearth of facilities for 'entertainment' on the peripheral housing estates, inhabited mainly by the working classes who, arguably, with their 'dissociation' from education and employment as a source of satisfaction, invest more heavily in leisure-time fulfilment. Thus, the pattern of redevelopment sets up a continuing 'contradiction' compounded by unemployment and educational 'traditionalism' between the high

1.Ibid. P. 171. 2.Ibid. P. 173.

leisure aspirations of working class adolescents, expensive and distant central facilities (even these were inadequate in Dundee), and the reality of weekday monotony on the street corner.

Thus, the Scottish context is in several respects different from its English counterpart. The continuing relatively high levels of unemployment (emphasised in the working class housing areas), the dominance of council tenancy in large, impersonal estates rather than owner occupation, the 'traditionalist' philosophy continuing to affect education (even in the 1970's), and the centralisation of leisure are all features which suggest a differential material circumstance in the large Scottish cities. However, these factors must not be treated as individual points of contrast with the industrial cities of England - the strength of their impact lies in their interrelationship to produce a particular social context to which the individual and the group must adapt, first on a 'material' level (as working class 'culture'), and then, at least potentially, on an 'expressive' level, as for example in the phenomenon of 'ganging'.

Most significant is the impetus which this context, or complex of conditions, gives to the search for 'identity', both on the individual and the group level. In a situation of tenancy, rather than ownership, of large 'barren' housing estates without 'identity', of unemployment, of 'street corner' monotony, of a 'too hasty' rejection by and of the demands for 'excellence' in the school, there is little left to the working class adolescent but the 'self', and the extension of 'self' - his peers in a similar structural position. In a situation of multiple and interrelating constraint potentially depriving the individual of creativity, purpose - and control, it is hardly surprising that an adaptation should be favoured based on aggression, 'power' and the assertion of 'self'. Moreover, one might reasonably expect this essentially symbolic structure to be woven around the individual and the group - there is little else available for appropriation and symbolic re-organisation. Both as 'style' and as 'myth', the 'gang' offers a 'solution', albeit potential rather than actual, to these problems of 'identity'.

Conclusion.

Throughout this work, it has been suggested that a 'solution' to the problematic of 'deviancy' in contemporary society can only be found in the 'rediscovery' of the 'symbolic' as a central feature in adaptation to material/cultural circumstance. Indeed, it has been suggested that the origins of 'structure' are themselves essentially symbolic. For example, the particular type of education chosen as an element in material circumstance to which individuals and groups must adapt is selected not from no-where but in terms of a 'cultural' priority. Thus, the shift from 'selective' to 'comprehensive' education was a response to the growing 'political' realisation that 'selection' was too visibly 'failing' - a more 'modern' accommodation to inequality was required in the interests of 'stability'.

A 'cultural' approach to social 'problems' allows a perspective which is not immediately partial as, for example, 'subcultural' theory, 'labelling', or 'radical' criminology. In the consideration of the complexities of the 'material/expressive' dialectic, at least some of the 'answers' to the central issue of a co-existent unity and diversity in contemporary British society can be found. It is indeed true and self-evident that inequality, exploitation and differential life-chances are structured into our society - there has been no attempt to hide this fact. However, any attempt to turn this empirical discovery into a 'Marxist' interpretation has proved 'inadequate' in terms of the complexity of human experience; the tendency has been to miss the central point of man's survival in and continued commitment to a depriving society. To the 'Marxist', this is a paradox usually resolved in statements of 'ideology' or 'false consciousness' and the potential for 'revolution' must always remain.

I see no 'revolution' and in my contacts with the boys, try as I might, could find no suggestion of 'alienation' or 'bitterness' with regard to the obviously differential and 'depriving' circumstance that they must endure. Indeed, they saw me as the one to be 'pitied' - how could I cope with 'all that study' and the penury of a grant. At that time, they were 'doing well', having 'fun' without responsibility, while I was struggling slowly towards future 'affluence'. Two years of close contact with boys often held by the police, courts and schools to be 'violent' and 'deviant' convinced me only of their 'integration' and the need for an 'explanation' of their behaviour that did not

rely on 'pathology' or 'revolution'.

I have suggested a possible 'solution' in the acceptance of differential material/cultural conditions affected by and affecting 'culture' on two levels, both symbolic. The first, 'material culture', corresponds in many ways to the working and middle class 'cultures' empirically discovered by 'positivist' researchers. This is the continuing adaptation necessary to exist in an objectively repressive and inequitable society - how to be 'working class' consigned to a life-time of manual labour or, on the other hand, how to be 'middle class' and accept the limitations (in terms of deferred gratification, progressive and incremental salary etc.) as well as the advantages of that position. Field workers have noted the enduring differences in the 'class' experience not only of education, employment, housing, leisure, but also of family, and even 'morality'. This continuing, generational adaptation to a differential circumstance is 'material culture' which, for convenience sake, I have based on the manual/non-manual divide, although this raises the immediate difficulty of those in routine non-manual occupations, the distinctions within the manual dimension, and so on. It is quite feasible that as well as the differential conditions associated with the manual/non-manual dichotomy, there may be further enduring clusters of inequalities affecting different groups to which they must erect 'material' cultural adaptations. This, however, has not been within the bounds of what remains an essentially exploratory analysis of 'culture' in contemporary Capitalist society.

As well as the continuing, generational adaptation to differential circumstance posed by 'material culture', it is obvious that there must be some means by which this tendency to 'diversity' based on the actual experience of inequality and exploitation can be 'pulled' together. The 'Marxist' would suggest that the whole structure rests ultimately on the effectiveness of the 'ideological' hegemony of the 'ruling class'. This 'solution' is too simplistic and degrades the position of those in the 'repressed' classes who are regarded essentially as 'brainwashed' into compliance - one day, they will 'see through' the system and the inevitable result will be 'revolution'.

Perhaps a more 'satisfactory' explanation of 'stability' can be found in the concept of 'expressive culture' which parallels the 'material' adaptation to enduring inequality. Thus, there is the enduring

possibility of 'contradiction' between the 'key images' of society disseminated through the media and the education system in particular and the 'reality' of 'material' deprivation. For example, education is generally suggested as open to all, based on equal opportunity, but this 'contradicts' the 'reality', the material facts, of working class 'dissociation' from the school and educational achievement. In such situations of 'contradiction', 'expressive culture' performs the quite separate function of symbolically defusing potential conflict through adaptation - in the case of education, through 'counter-school' culture.

On another level, 'expressive' adaptations can provide meaning, creativity and purpose to a monotonous and anonymous material circumstance. 'Shop-floor culture' - with its emphasis on the informal ('wit', 'presence', etc.) - may have arisen as an 'expressive' adaptation to the monotony of the factory and the production line. However, the prevalence of this adaptation to-day might suggest its passage from 'expressive' into 'material' culture as a feature in the continuing adaptation to the fact of manual employment. The 'gang', on the other hand, may be seen as an 'expressive' adaptation, transitory in duration, based on the reality of life in areas such as Jute Hill and Harrytown where 'identity' has become a major issue in a context of council housing, unemployment, 'traditionalist' education, and centralised leisure.

To conclude, it is agreed that the 'material/expressive' scheme of 'culture' based on symbol demands further empirical research and theoretical clarification. But, nevertheless, it is suggested that a 'cultural' view remains the best hope of understanding the complexity of contemporary British society. To concentrate on either inequality and exploitation or 'consensus' is to miss their interrelationship in a symbolic pattern based on flexibility, stability, and adaptation. Certainly, 'ganging' as a feature of life in Edinburgh and Dundee is explained more adequately in terms of a symbolic adaptation to material circumstance than as a 'subcultural' phenomenon based on 'difference' and a 'pathological' inclination to violence. The boys were on occasion violent, agreed, and their symbolic machinations did occasionally result in injury but, generally, their preoccupation with 'ganging' posed very little real threat to order as the ethnography suggests. Any useful analysis must be based not on

their occasional violence, but on their <u>general</u> 'integration'. The issue is to explain that 'fact' in a manner that <u>does not deny it</u>.

.....

APPENDIX.

Method/The 'Lads'.

As has been implied, the present state of Deviancy theory is such that it cannot be assumed that there is a generally accepted theoretical foundation for field work. It would seem that the prospective researcher can either embrace an ideology (of the 'Left' or the 'Right') and feel himself secure in the praise of his like-minded fellows or, more rarely, he can recognise the polarization of theory and work towards a synthesis.

In such a situation of competing 'paradigms', the field worker cannot be sure of anything and must justify everything, most of all his methodology - even 'objectivity' is no longer immune from attack, as Bittner illustrates.[1]

> "Of the three positive reasons for the abandonment of the positivist idea of objectivity, the first consists of a version of the inherited view about the methodological contrast between the natural and social sciences; the second advances the consideration that far from being practised in the interest of building a science of society, positivist objectivity was partly a deliberate and partly an unwitting way of not facing the tasks of studying social reality; and the third - the most radical of the three - argues that efforts to impose positivistic objectivity on social enquiry involve a contradiction in terms inasmuch as the discipline is programmatically oriented to the study of matters that are inherently devoid of objective meaning."

In this context of scepticism as to the very foundations of methodology, it becomes binding on the researcher to detail the reasons for his choice of method and also the pattern of his research. 'Impressionism' is not an adequate base for theoretical discussion and, for this reason, the writer rejects the absolute implications of Bittner's comments and, rather than deny 'positivist' method totally, concentrates on the selection, elaboration, and justification of the method chosen for this study.

The Case for Participant Observation.

The present need is to outline a research method which will allow a clear view of symbolic structures whilst avoiding 'pure' description. In this connection, it should be noted that method is based like theory on principle and premise and therefore the structure of any research

1.E. Bittner: 'Objectivity and Realism in Sociology':P.113 in G. Psathas (Ed.): Phenomenological Sociology: 1973 Wiley N.Y.

should be considered carefully lest it inevitably lead away from 'reality'. Polarisation is the obvious danger - method, like theory, is best served by compromise, rather than by an emphasis on either 'structure' or the 'individual'.[1]

> "The two kinds of knowledge - statistical and social - differ in kind, and along with their respective aims - prediction and sensitive understanding - are in many ways in tension with one another. In the long run, however, they both contribute to the larger aims of the social sciences."

Any method must be objective <u>and</u> critical, capable of fully 'appreciating' the phenomenon under study, while avoiding a lapse into <u>mere</u> description or <u>mere</u> statistics. Paul Rock makes this point for the limited field of 'deviancy', our prime concern.[2]

> "The sociologists of deviancy tend to adhere to the methodological tenet that understanding is best acquired when a balance is attained between two states. One state is achieved when the interior world of a system of action can be appreciated...The other, contrary, state is that of social distance, which permits the sociologist to regard the commonsense world as strange and unfamiliar."

In short, methodological considerations are not, and cannot be, purely 'scientific'; they must be adapted to the diversity and rationality of the subject - man. The method chosen for this study must reflect this debate and its conclusions if it is to have any validity as an explanatory tool. The question asked must be - which method will most effectively allow the study of 'gangs' as symbolic structure - <u>as meaning</u>?[3]

> "The purpose of participant observation is to study human meanings and how they are revealed in the context of society."

In fact, participant observation, as a method, would seem to relate most closely to the problem of meaning and purpose, the basis of this paper. McCall and Simmons confirm this implication with specific advantages of this method, all of which apply to the area of symbol[4] and, in particular, suggest its value for the study of phenomena seen through distorting lenses by the subject.[5]

1.S. Bruyn: <u>The Human Perspective in Sociology</u>: Prentice-Hall 1966 P.34.
2.P. Rock: <u>Deviant Behaviour</u>: Hutchinson & Co. 1973 P.24.
3.S. Bruyn: op. cit. P.47.
4.G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: <u>Issues in Participant Observation</u>: Addison-Wesley: 1969 P.341.
5.Ibid. P.328.

> "Participant Observation makes it possible to check description against fact and, noting discrepancies, become aware of systematic distortions made by the person under study; such distortions are less likely to be discovered by interviewing alone."

Becker and Geer are also in no doubt about the value of a flexible method when confronting a problematic research situation and the elaboration of new concepts, new theory. Generally, Participant Observation is better for investigation and discovery, more structured methods for proof.[1]

> "Research aimed at discovering problems and hypotheses requires a data-gathering technique that maximises the possibility of such discovery....(these) techniques... include the free or unstructured interview and participant observation."

Although lacking detail, the brief treatment accorded here has sufficed to demonstrate that the broad field embraced by Participant Observation is particularly suitable for the purposes of this research. In short, the implications of its theoretical structure can best be studied within the flexible framework of Participant Observation.

Of course, this method, to be useful, must comprise a wide range of techniques, not merely the 'observation' of incidents and behaviour. McCall and Simmons make this point quite clearly.[2]

> "(Participant Observation) involves some...social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artefacts and open-endedness in the directions the study takes."

But the advantages of this flexibility are also a potential disadvantage. Without care, the study can become a confusion of meaningless data with little objective value. Methodologists have sounded warnings about the dangers of 'slackness' and suggested the importance of not only applying rigorous data quality control, but also of making explicit the exact procedures followed and difficulties experienced, so that the reader can pass his own judgement on validity and reliability.[3]

> "Two final problems: data collected by participant observation are often only used to illustrate, not prove, a hypothesis. 'For example is no proof'.....And, secondly, data may be subject to retrospective selection, if not

1. H.S. Becker & B. Geer: P.268. in R.N. Adams & J.J. Preiss (Eds.) Human Organisation Research: 1960 Ill. Dorsey Press.
2. G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op. cit. P.1.
3. Colin Bell: 'A Note on Participant Observation': Sociology Vol.3 1969 PP.417-8.

> falsification, to fit the final analysis. A solution to both these problems is to write what might be called the 'natural history' of the research: stating hypotheses in advance and what will be accepted as proof, and documenting the field worker's research positions which are important data in their own right, giving details of entry to, and exit from, the system studied."

The warning is quite clear. It only remains to try and follow its stipulations by outlining the research procedures in this study, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions arrived at.

The History of the Research.

It has already been pointed out that my interest in the phenomenon of 'ganging' was aroused by the 'contradiction' between the public opinion that juvenile 'deviants' were 'different' in some way, that their behaviour was 'senseless', and my own experience of interaction with lower class adolescents that was based on 'fun', 'having a good time', in short - normality.

Thus, when the opportunity was offered to undertake research at Edinburgh University, this 'contradiction' presented itself as an obvious topic. Research in Edinburgh was mainly carried out between November 1971 and September 1972, concentrating on two large council housing estates, Harrytown and Barrackhill, the field worker having a flat in the latter area. (The names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.)

This period could be called the initial phase when general ideas of 'structure' and 'myth' were put to the test in the field and the subjects' views compared as far as possible with observed behaviour. Of course, the concentration on large council housing estates inevitably meant that the research was directed towards lower class adolescents.

The second phase of research came when I obtained employment as a Detached Youth Worker in Dundee. The time scale here was that effective research was conducted between October 1972 and August 1973 in varying situations, ranging from 'on the streets' to a Coffee Bar Project. This provided an opportunity to introduce a comparative element into the study and, hopefully, to see if the conclusions reached in the Edinburgh situation would broadly apply in Dundee, thus giving them an enhanced reliability.

Of course, there was a certain amount of conflict because of the official role of 'youth worker', but this was recognised and minimised

as far as possible in contact with the boys. A great deal of general information was gathered following the same pattern as in Edinburgh and reaching much the same conclusions but then an unique opportunity arrived, quite by chance, which allowed a detailed insight into the genesis of a 'gang' and a 'gang war' - a dynamic rather than a static view.

As Detached Youth Worker, I was asked to assist in the establishment of a Coffee Bar in a run-down area of Dundee notorious for its 'hardness' and 'gang activity' - Jute Hill. Moreover, there were no restrictions as to how the project should be managed, thus allowing an opportunity to monitor and avoid bias. Basically, the approach adopted, somewhat contrary to the aims of 'youth work', was one of non-interference, of letting the boys take the initiative. It was hoped that distortions of an imposed nature would thus be avoided.

Of course, the situation that emerged was fortuitous in that the development of the Coffee Bar did center around 'gangs' and conflict, but this only validates the observations made and renders more unique the opportunity provided. Although there have been many comments by field workers on 'myth' and 'fantasy' in 'ganging', few, if any, have actually observed the development of a 'gang' and inter-area rivalries.

The most valid criticism might be that the mere presence of the Coffee Bar structured the situation and this cannot be denied because the Bar did in fact provide the focal point for developments. However, <u>the boys used the situation</u> rather than the reverse and the evolution of a 'gang' conflict was natural in that the focal point might as easily have been the street corner. In other words, no encouragement was offered to the potential 'gang leaders' or the 'members' - the resulting conflict merely <u>happened</u>.

<u>Choosing a Sample.</u>

It has already been suggested that Participant Observation should be approached no less rigorously than surveying and this priority extends to the subject of choosing the sample. However, the participant observer does have special problems in this area because of the flexibility of his method. Nevertheless, he must <u>at least</u> attempt to 'describe' his method.[1]

> "Lacking the ability to <u>prescribe</u> their samples, participant observers should take pains to <u>describe</u> and justify

1.G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op. cit. P.67.

their selection of samples on all levels."

McCall and Simmons go on to suggest three types of sample that may be useful. The 'quota' sample involves interviewing and observing persons from certain categories, while the 'search for exceptions' entails a search for those who do not conform to hypothesised empirical relationships. However, the third category, the 'snowball' sample, proved to be the most valuable method of finding subjects in the current research. Thus, a chain of contacts was built up and constantly developed to get as wide a perspective as possible on the field situation.

This 'pushing out' from initial contacts was vital in the Edinburgh part of the research where I had to go out to the phenomenon rather than have it come to me. Thus, a relatively few initial contacts and chance meetings were elaborated into a web of respondents covering a wide area. In Dundee, on the other hand, the subjects came to the Coffee Bar without any form of selection except, of course, the influence of the neighbourhood. The sample there is thus less open to the criticism that the subjects were 'selected' by the researcher and therefore, possibly, reflect a built-in bias.

Generally, I was aware of the dangers of a restricted sample and so great efforts were expended in order to contact as many unrelated young people as possible. That is, instead of having only one or two contacts and 'snowballing' from these, the idea was to proceed from as many different points as possible in a succession of 'snowball' samples. This proved most valuable in Edinburgh. In Dundee, the contacts for this kind of sample were more limited and the emphasis was on the Coffee Bar.

Of course, bias may still exist. For example, contacts were almost exclusively lower class adolescents, thus ignoring the middle class contribution, if any, to the problem. This proved unavoidable. However, it must be repeated that an attempt was made to view the research situation from as many different angles as possible. 'Snowball' samples were used, as well as random contacts, press cuttings, observations of 'incidents' and, of course, the case study of the Coffee Bar Project. Mensh and Henry have made a similar suggestion as a means of reducing error and bias.[1]

"Error can be reduced through multiplying observers and by

1.I.N. Mensh & J. Henry:'Direct Observation and Psychological Tests in Anthropological Field Work': in McCall & Simmons: op. cit. P.306.

> multiplying the number of points of view from which the phenomenon is observed."

Of course, this is not to deny that there were problems in making contact, especially with those defined as 'hard men'. Initial contacts were often reluctant to take me to the homes of these boys, even when they knew them quite well. This led to a frustrated remark in my field notes.

> "...to meet all except a boy's most intimate friends, one must proceed to a neutral area, such as the pub."

In the 'pub', my contact would try to catch the potential informant's eye, as if by accident. This 'charade' would often go on for several nights until a 'suitable' opportunity for conversation presented itself. On the other hand, some boys actually sought me out in their eagerness to talk, which proved on some occasions to be equally disconcerting.

However, having outlined the method of choosing a sample, it might be useful to describe some of the 'key' respondents in more detail. This is not intended to suggest their 'violent' tendencies - quite the reverse. It is hoped that the general information and the brief biographies will serve to illustrate the diversity among the boys. In no way can they be conveniently categorised as 'gang members' - reality is far too complex for such neat labels.

The Subjects: Some 'Key' Respondents.

The young people contacted were almost all working class. I did not consciously go out looking for 'gang members' but rather sought informants who might provide useful information on the subject of 'ganging' and associated group behaviour. Thus, although many of the boys claimed to have participated in 'gang fights' or to be 'members' of 'gangs', several had merely heard stories, rumours, or could provide general information on the current 'gang scene'. Boys and girls (only 7) were contacted, aged between 14 and 23yrs., with the vast majority in the 14-17 age group and of working age.

In all, the total number of contacts in the two cities was sixty-eight, of whom approximately one-third fell into the category of marginal informants, that is, they were met infrequently and provided a varying amount of less 'testable' detail that forms part of the backcloth to 'ganging' as an activity. They would pass on rumours, for example, that the 'Tongs were coming', or that X or Y had joined the

'Huns'. On the other hand, the remaining two-thirds of contacts provided information that could be more easily checked for reliability and validity and used to build up a detailed picture of not only 'ganging', but also adolescent behaviour as a whole in the areas studied.

It has already been pointed out that the research areas had a history in some cases of more than thirty years (for example, parts of the Barrackhill ward). Indeed, the majority of the contacts (47) had been born in the area, although a substantial minority (21) had moved in when either very young or up to ten years old - usually as the result of redevelopment, but sometimes as the result of eviction or transfer from another area.

Again, a large proportion lived in the older parts of the areas (45), with the remainder scattered around the newer developments. In Jute Hill in Dundee, some of the housing conditions were particularly bad and the occasional visit to a boy's home could be quite traumatic - one tends to be rather uneasy when sitting on a settee that appears distinctly 'verminous'. However, generally, the lads spent very little time at home and showed little inclination to invite me to view their housing conditions. Thus, inevitably, the main contact was 'on the streets', 'hanging about', an occupation that absorbed most of their leisure time. Even the coldest weather would do nothing to persuade them to stay at home. There was thus little opportunity to construct any kind of scale of 'deprivation' by which to assess the subjects. In a sense, my contact with them was one-sided, confined to their free time, not touching the areas of home, school or work - a limitation that must be remembered throughout the ethnography.

A general point can be made about employment. Although it has clearly been pointed out that opportunities were limited for young people, this did not prevent many of the lads from adopting a rather 'cavalier' attitude to employment. Thus, of the 68 contacts, 35 were unemployed <u>at least once</u> during the course of the research. Moreover, unemployment was often the result of 'getting pissed off' rather than redundancy or some other economic cause. There was a marked tendency to treat all jobs as identical with <u>pay</u> the sole differentiating factor.

Sometimes this attitude could seem rather illogical, for example, where jobs would be compared on their <u>potential</u> earnings

rather than actual pay. For example, a factory might offer a low basic rate but endless hours of overtime which might result in earnings rather higher than a job in a shop with better basic pay, conditions and prospects. When faced with such a choice, the lads would almost without exception choose the factory, as would the girls. In fact, if anything, the girls tended to change their jobs more often than the boys.

The type of employment ranged from van boy to factory labourer but with all jobs having in common a reliance on 'labour' and physical effort, rather than skill. The girls' equivalents were the equally undemanding positions of shop assistants or apprentice hairdressers - the 'dogsbodies' of the hairdressing world. Questioned on their attitude to work, the subjects generally showed little interest - except, of course, in their 'wages'. One or two of the lads worked as 'brickie's' labourers on building sites and their pay, often swollen by bonuses, was the subject of much admiration.

However, one aspect of employment often emphasised and sought after was 'outside work', usually in the building trade, but sometimes for the council in the road maintenance section. Apart from the higher pay, the lads did seem to have a distinct preference for open air work, based on the assumption that there would be greater freedom and more opportunity for a 'laugh'. In the factory, one was too often subject to the pressures of the production line - Biscuit factories were particularly disliked in this respect.

In order to try and give some impression of the lads, their attitudes and appearance, I will provide a few brief profiles of some of the main informants and participants in the 'gangs' supposedly dominant in the areas studied.

Pat.

Pat lived in the Harrytown area of Edinburgh and was one of the major sources of information on 'ganging' in that area, also proving invaluable as an initial point of contact with other boys. He was well-known and liked and made a habit of taking me to the 'in' Pubs, not only on the estate, but also in the city centre.

Of about medium height, and not particularly well-built, Pat did not dress with any originality; if anything, his style of dress could be termed 'shabbily' conventional. However, in spite of his lack of fashion sense, he seemed to have no trouble finding girl friends. In

fact, he took great delight in boasting about his sex exploits to me though I did not personally observe any examples of his allegedly magnetic attraction for the opposite sex.

In demeanour, Pat appeared rather placid and tended to be lazy. However, I was assured by his 'mates' that he was always 'losing the heid', in other words, uncontrollable when provoked. He himself admitted that sometimes in a 'battle', he went 'a bit too far'. His home was one of the few I had occasion to visit and I was on friendly terms with his father, in spite of his drinking habits and fierce temper. On several occasions, when the children (seven) were younger, he used to come home drunk and quite literally smash up the house. Indeed, this continued until the children became too big - literally - to be threatened effectively.

Educationally, it is difficult to say whether Pat was bright or dull because his academic record was rather overshadowed by his tendency to set fire to the schools he was sent to. In fact, one incident of this kind was potentially very serious. Needless to say, he was always in trouble with the teachers, if not for his behaviour in the classroom, then for playing truant.

This 'aimless' quality continued when he left school and took up employment, usually on building sites, where his many Irish relatives managed to get him 'taken on'. He was ambitious but could not really decide <u>how</u> to get on ('to make money'). When I left Edinburgh, he was nearly 18 and had decided to sub-contract, that is, to become self-employed and take on jobs from main contractors and private individuals.

However, throughout my acquaintance with Pat, one of his main 'problems' was delinquency, usually taking and driving away, theft and rowdyism. His repeated offences ultimately, and inevitably, ended in his being 'sent away'.

In spite of his record, he was always something of a 'loner', preferring the company of at most one or two special friends - a paradox in view of his popularity. Thus, any leadership qualities he might have had were not evidenced in any 'gang' context. For example, in a locally notorious episode of joyriding, car thefts reached epidemic proportions in Harrytown, even achieving the ultimate recognition of an appeal for witnesses on 'Police Call'. But these incidents were perpetrated mainly by the closely-knit clique of Pat

and his two friends, and not related to any 'YBT' activities.

Nevertheless, Pat's somewhat cynical and objective attitude to 'ganging' combined with his local knowledge proved a valuable source of information and contacts as well as a useful balance to the extravagances of the more 'committed', such as 'Rogey' and 'Muff'.

Jim/'Rogey'.

'Rogey' was a complete contrast to Pat. Aged sixteen at the time of the research, he lived in the Ferry Bank area of Dundee and, at least verbally, was very 'committed' to the idea of 'gangs' and 'ganging'. He saw Dundee as broken-up into territories, rigidly patrolled by the local 'gang' and, in spite of the continuing failure of arranged 'battles' to take place, he never lost his enthusiasm - or his conviction.

Where Pat eschewed fashion, 'Rogey' identified himself with the 'skinheads'; he was never seen without the regulation 'crombie' and 'Doc Martin's', even in the height of summer. The coat made it difficult to guage his real physique and, being small of stature (only about 5' 5"), made him appear rather broader than he might have been; probably the reason he never took it off.

Sporting an extreme 'skinhead' crew-cut, 'Rogey' had a rather intimidating manner, not helped by his tendency to use extremely foul language and to lose his temper at the slightest provocation. I had personal experience of his hair-trigger temper on one or two occasions as well as his tendency when angry to punctuate conversation by kicking the nearest piece of furniture.

Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to visit his home and had to be content with conversation on the streets and in the Coffee Bar. Of all the subjects, 'Rogey' invested most heavily in 'gang culture' and was prepared to talk endlessly about the different groupings, 'leadership' and, especially, 'hardness'. He prided himself on his fighting ability, although he respected 'Roby' who he swore was a 'magic battler'.

A disturbing tendency that he had was the habit of carrying a weapon, usually a knife, which always made the outcome of any fight he was involved in potentially lethal. On several occasions, I watched apprehensively in case he looked like losing a fight; his personality was such that, unlike most of the other boys, he might conceivably, in panic, use a weapon.

However, this aggression can be overplayed, since for most of the time he was 'reasonable' and open to conversation. Unfortunately, this had a disturbing tendency to develop into a monologue about the 'Tongs', of which he claimed to be one of the leading 'members'.

'Rogey' had left school fairly recently, a fact which he welcomed with much relief since he had been at best unco-operative and, at worst, disruptive at the local secondary school. Interestingly, as he was perhaps the most involved of the subjects (with the possible exception of 'Muff') in the 'gang' scenario, he had great difficulty in keeping a job for more than a month. In fact, his longest period of employment had been as a van boy with a Soft Drinks Firm for just over four weeks. This was his first job after leaving school and was followed by a whole series of usually casual employments, for example, helping in scrap yards. His shortest period of employment had been <u>one day</u> in a large store as a 'shelf-filler', his resentment at being told what to do leading to his telling the manager to 'stick his fuckin' job up his arse'.

Finally, a point that must be made, 'Rogey' conformed to the media image of the 'skinhead', so much so that he was almost at times a caricature. In particular, apart from the style of dress he adopted, he was perhaps the most prejudiced person I have ever met. Especially resented were Asians of whom there were a number in the Jute Hill area, especially in the tenement housing. His favourite subject was 'getting the Pakis', whom he claimed were 'dirty bastards'.

Unlike Pat, who became progressively less involved in delinquency and peer groups as the research progressed, 'Rogey' was on the opposite path and observing him one felt uneasily that his fate was sealed; if anyone were to be injured or to injure someone else, one felt it would be 'Rogey'. In the lads own terms, he 'blethered' (talked) too much.

<u>Jim/'Roby'.</u>

'Roby' was the acknowledged 'leader' of the 'Tongs', or at least 'Rogey' spent most of his spare time either telling this 'fact' to anyone who would listen or engraving it on doors, walls and, on one occasion, someone's car. At 17½yrs. old, 'Roby' was one of the older visitors to the Coffee Bar in Jute Hill, although, like 'Rogey', he lived on the large Ferry Bank estate.

In many ways, he was the antithesis of a 'gang leader', always

pleasant and willing to talk and never instigating trouble. However, I was assured that he was a 'guid battler' by 'Rogey' and certainly I observed no attempts by any of the other lads to force a confrontation with him. Again, when the question of a 'uniform' for the 'Tongs' was brought up, it was 'Roby', not 'Rogey', who was the first to wear the 'regulation' red sweater with white stripes on the arms. However, since no-one else ever got a jersey, one must be somewhat wary of the significance of this 'uniform'.

Bearing in mind his general demeanour and friendly approaches to the other lads, to the boys in the 'Huns' as well as to those allegedly making up the 'Tongs', it was always difficult to see 'Roby' as a 'gang leader'. Certainly, as later chapters will show, when a 'battle' did seem imminent, even one theoretically organised as a 'showdown' between the 'Huns' and the 'Tongs', he was always rather out of touch with the preparations being made, on one occasion approaching the Coffee Bar with his girl friend at a time when the 'Huns' were massing for 'battle' and 'Rogey' - his alleged deputy - had set off for the city centre to recruit 'allies'.

Again, from all accounts, although not noted for his academic achievements, 'Roby' had not been a major source of disruption at school and his employer was quite happy with his efforts and attendance - he worked in a local Jute Mill. His greatest interest seemed to be his girl friend, Carol, who accompanied him almost everywhere, and not 'Rogey', who seemed generally to be intent on his own private 'gang war'.

'Muff'.

'Muff' was aged 17 at the time of the research and lived in the Jute Hill area. In some ways, he was similar to 'Rogey', that is, he seemed to occupy the same role for the 'Huns' as 'Rogey' did for the 'Tongs'. He agitated, elaborated, and planned incessantly, once the seeds of a 'Huns/Tongs' conflict had been planted.

In his speech and general mannerisms, 'Muff' seemed to have none of the qualities of a 'leader' - 'charisma', 'style', 'wit', etc. Indeed, at times I came very near the conclusion that he could be described most kindly as 'slow' and rather cruelly as 'simple'. However, part of my impression may have been due to the fact that 'Muff' always remained rather distant and I never achieved that ease of discourse that I felt I had with most of the other lads. Perhaps, my

manner of speech and obviously different background meant more to him than it did to the others. Certainly, the net result was that he kept me at a distance and there were fewer opportunities to 'get behind' his overt aggressive behaviour and obtain some assessment of his 'real' character.

'Muff' was fairly tall and sturdy, though hardly good-looking, with the expression on his face mirroring my doubts as to his quick 'wits'. Although he wore the regulation 'Doc. Martin's' (a type of boot much favoured for fighting) and short levi's, he did not have a 'skinhead' haircut and overall did not carry the outfit with the swaggering assurance of the other boys. It should be pointed out that for the purpose mainly of effect most of the boys - especially in Dundee - had developed a loose-limbed, aggressive walk reminiscent of the West Indian 'rude boy'. Unfortunately, 'Muff' tended to shamble.

However, his undramatic appearance did not affect his leaning towards 'ganging'. On many occasions, he would be seen locked in debate with 'Rogey' - sometimes literally - over the relative strength of the 'Huns' or the 'Tongs'. It was difficult to assess his position in any 'leadership' hierarchy since he never claimed to be a 'leader'. On the other hand, there was little doubt that, in combination with 'Rogey', he stimulated most of the violence <u>that did occur</u>.

As a point of interest, there was no occasion to visit his home, for the reasons mentioned above, but an external view of the tenement in which he lived suggested its imminent demolition and the conditions inside must have been at best decaying and, at worst, squalid.

However, unlike many of the other boys, 'Muff' had held the same job since leaving school and, in one of his rare moments of conversation, confessed to liking it. He helped out in a local scrap yard and could be seen on occasion collecting junk around the area.

<u>Johnny</u>.

It should be pointed out in drawing up these short sketches of some of the lads that the research was not directed at a group of homogeneous 'gang boys', with an interest only in 'turf' and 'battles'. On the contrary, the lads were a miscellaneous collection of personalities such as one might expect to find in any section of society. Some were so affable and friendly as to make any violence on their part seem totally out of character, others rather colourless and

lacking in distinction, while one or two seemed completely caught up in the world of 'ganging' - 'Muff' and 'Rogey' being the two prime examples.

The reaction to these 'stirrers' (as they were known) varied from indifference on many occasions to animated interest when excitement and 'action' looked like resulting. The important point is that individuality prevailed to a considerable degree; 'Muff' and 'Rogey' could be engaged in a heated debate while at the same time the rest of the clients of the Coffee Bar were joking, 'pissing about', and generally taking little interest.

Johnny was one of these 'less committed' youngsters who tended to avoid any 'action' but, conversely, he was also one of the most <u>verbal</u> concerning the 'rules' of 'territory' and 'gang' behaviour. Fourteen years old and still at school, he lived in the tenement blocks in Harrytown. He was fairly short, with dark, medium-length hair and rather good-looking. Like many of the boys in Edinburgh, his style of dress did not conform to any rigid pattern, though there was a tendency to what can only be described as the 'casual' look, standardised by many of the 'pop' groups of the time - longish hair, jeans, v-neck jumper, boots (usually Doc. Martin's). The 'skinhead' look had not gained a real grip on teenage fashion in Edinburgh at that time.

Like Pat, his parents were Irish immigrants who had moved into the estate from a slum inner-city area some years before he was born. Again, his father was also strict but heavy drinking - somewhat of a paradox. This combination of harsh discipline for '<u>visible</u>' offences - being caught by the police, or causing the neighbours to complain - and a parental example that is less than inspiring, was common among the parents that I contacted. In fact, the boys had a considerable degree of freedom from parental control, tempered only by the fear of 'being lifted', in which case parental sanctions could be expected, usually in the form of being 'thrown out' (though almost always only for a token period).

Johnny had not done much credit to the educational system and had rather more ambition to succeed as a 'pop' musician than to gain his school leaving certificate. However, he could not be termed disruptive at school, just an uninterested passenger on the educational conveyer belt and, like most of the other boys, hoping to jump off into the

world of employment at the earliest opportunity.

Although, as has already been suggested, he was prone to spread rumours about 'ganging', Johnny seemed to spend most of his time in reality either 'chasing' girls or 'hanging about' with the boys up at the 'Multis'. In many ways, he seemed to convey the spirit and the paradox of 'ganging' - <u>involvement without 'action'</u>. In other words, 'action' remained secondary to words; he lived in a world of rumour and <u>potential</u> excitement. Unfortunately, his major experience of 'gang' violence was completely unexpected and involved his being struck with an iron bar while visiting another area - 'Jungle Land' - which he had always insisted was 'off limits'.

In many ways, Johnny summed up the <u>general</u> pattern among the boys, that is, in the mid-teen age group (14-17), working class, basically 'ordinary', concerned with 'having a giggle' rather than fighting, and yet always open to 'excitement' if it came along. However, it is important to minimise the features the boys held in common. Yes, they did tend to have a 'limited' view of 'life', to be prejudiced against others (not only immigrants, but those who were in any way 'different') and to have a shared view of leisure that made them seem generally pre-occupied with fighting and 'gangs', <u>at least verbally</u>. But, on the other hand, the 'public' image they so carefully maintained, standardised in the 'walk' and the aggressive 'glare', as also the threatening posture on the sidewalk, must not obscure an individuality of personal characteristics that belie the caricatures that seem inevitably to result from description. Like the rest of us, some were pleasant, amiable, even 'charismatic', others were dull, colourless and sometimes 'boring'.

<u>Terry</u>.

Terry lived in the Barrackhill area and was 14 at the time of research. Like Johnny, he was still at school. Fair-haired, good-looking and of medium height, the immediate impression he created was of the 'boy next door'. Whether he was conscious of this image or not, he certainly would not have been pleased with it, preferring to think of himself as a 'hard man', able to 'take care of himself'. Certainly, his friends were of the opinion that he was 'guid in a battle' and could 'gi' any boy a square-go'.

However, although I heard much about his exploits, I did not

myself get an opportunity to see him 'in action'. Most of my contacts with him were confined to the street corner or the frequent occasions he helped me to fix my notoriously unreliable motor scooter - as a scooter owner himself (though under the legal age of ownership), we had a certain affinity. On these occasions, he gave little impression of 'hardness'; on the contrary, like Johnny, he was one of the more lively conversationalists among the boys, with a unique line in jokes.

However, with his friends on the 'corner', there was a tendency to retreat into a more formal attitude of 'toughness', illustrated by a certain aggressive stance and a 'coolness' of expression, combined with an unnerving , but deliberate, occupation of as much of the pavement as possible, forcing passers-by to step into the road.

In common with most of the other boys, he had accomplished little at school, although he confided that the teachers were always telling him that he was 'bright' and could 'go far'. He tended to use this as a defence against those who had succeeded, saying, 'I could dae it if I wanted'; the implication being that he '<u>didn't want</u>.' However, as a concession, he did admit that he hoped to get an apprenticeship when he left school, possibly as a motor mechanic.

Although many of the boys were interested in football, Terry was unusually fanatical in his support of 'Hibs' (one of the Edinburgh teams); he never missed a home match and, whenever possible, tried to go to away games. This interest extended to membership of a local team which he played for on Sunday afternoons. His conversation thus tended to be dominated by either football or local 'gossip', that is, the latest exploits of the 'Terror'.

<u>Phil.</u>

Finally, having tried to convey some of the 'ordinariness' of the boys contacted, as well as the tendency for 'ganging' to occupy a varying, but central, place in the conversation 'culture', with some subjects tending to over-play the 'reality' in their attempts to make life more 'interesting', a brief outline of one of the older contacts might now be useful as a 'balancing' profile.

Phil was 19yrs. old and particularly useful in the information he provided on his peers and the situation in the area (Harrytown) when he was involved with the 'Y.B.T.' - a 'historical' perspective. Again, his progression out of this activity made his comments on those of his peers who continued to be 'involved' in the local 'Team'

particularly revealing.

Phil was one of those boys who over a period had acquired the label of 'mad', so much so that I was warned against contacting him. However, I did make contact, though not without some trepidation, and discovered him to be rather more 'ordinary' than 'gossip' suggested. Where I had expected a 'brute', bearing the scars of a violent past, I discovered a rather average individual, in every sense of the word - average build, height, looks - and personality. It was rather difficult to suppose that this was the same 'heidcase' I had been warned against.

Indeed, after a rather undistinguished 'career' at the local secondary school and an equally colourless period of employment, Phil had decided to get married and 'make something of himself'. Basically, this involved making money rather than personal improvement. To this end, he was not only working in a factory during the day, but also as a barman at night - six days a week. There can be no doubt that his earnings had increased, but at what cost? However, my slight murmerings of - 'weren't the hours rather long?' and 'how long could he keep it up?' - were dismissed as irrelevant. On the contrary, he saw himself as 'having settled down', as accepting his 'responsibilities'.

However, there was another side to Phil usually shown in his evening hotel employment rather than at any other time. He had a fierce temper and, with his two older brothers on duty as 'bouncers' to 'back him up', he soon developed a reputation in the hotel for instigating incidents rather than preventing them. Stories of the fights in the Bar multiplied, usually accompanied by comments such as, 'Phil's a nutcase - you're askin' fer trouble if ye stert shoutin' time an' immediately stert grabbin' boys' glesses (drinks)'.

When I put this point, and others, to Phil, his answer was quite simply that, having grown up with these boys, he knew how to 'handle them'. Any sign of 'weakness' will be exploited; they must be treated with aggression basically because <u>they expect it</u>. Based on these premises, his behaviour seemed 'reasonable' but did nothing to convince others that age had curbed his aggressive instincts.

<u>Problems in the Field</u>.

Having outlined the criteria underlying the choice of 'participant observation' as a method and having further provided brief profiles of some of the 'key' respondents, it might be useful to provide a short

description of problems encountered in the field. Indeed, it is very easy to paint a picture of orderliness and clear direction when relating a participant observation type study, but this is misleading in that it denies the reader any view of the problems, the difficulties, that are inevitably encountered. Thus, the progress of the research is as important as the final conclusions and ethnography, however interesting they may be. The methods used are themselves a source of data and, indeed, the conclusions stand or fall by the 'tightness', objectivity, and coherence of the field study.[1]

> "Results are only as good as the basic theory and methods used in 'finding' and interpreting them. The actual research situation, especially in the case of participant observation.....constitutes an important source of data, for it is just as subject to prediction and explanation as the substantive results sought."

Obviously, a full account of every procedure and its attendant difficulties would be impractical, but a consideration of some of the major aspects and the way they were approached may well prove enlightening. A further reason for this emphasis on method is that in many ways this thesis is a contradiction of the basic premises of Patrick in his study of Glasgow Gangs. However, his work, while descriptively very full, lacks any clear outline of method. Indeed, the following statement could be described as a summary of his discussion of how he conducted the research, the problems, and the restriction of bias.[2]

> "...a descriptive account of a participant observation study of one such gang which I met on twelve occasions between October 1966 and January 1967...just under 120 hours in the field."

There is no discussion, however brief, of field relations, recording, interviewing, problems of inference and proof, and data quality control. Without suggesting that these are the only issues, each will be discussed briefly in relation to this study.

<u>Entering the Field: My Role.</u>

The importance of the role adopted by the field worker has been frequently pointed out by methodologists.[3]

> "A common point made by field researchers is the necessity of establishing a role within the group to be studied.... The importance of this point obviously stems from the fact that the kinds of activities to which the observer will be

1.A.V. Cicourel: <u>Method & Measurement in Sociology</u>: Free Press N.Y. 1964
2.J. Patrick: op. cit. P.9/10.
3.A.V. Cicourel: op. cit. P.41/2.

> exposed will vary with his relationships in the group studied."

In short, the information gained is shaped by the social position of the worker, by the context in which he is placed. It is very important, therefore, to ensure that a role is assigned that maximises the possibility of obtaining useful and pertinent data with minimal limitations on the range of activities and incidents that can be observed in the field.

This implies the necessity to enter the field 'correctly' because, once allocated a role, the researcher may be unable to change it, with potentially disastrous results for his data. A major issue then was to decide which role to adopt in the field and, in this regard, the typology suggested by Gold proved useful, that is, the distinction between the roles of 'complete participant', 'participant-as-observer', 'observer-as-participant', and the 'complete observer'.[1]

The role of 'complete participant', that is, joining a 'gang', was discounted as impractical and unduly limiting. The advantages of proximity to the phenomenon appeared to be outweighed by the dangers of concentration on one group, to the exclusion of the broader view. Also, my accent and appearance (distinctly 'student') seemed inappropriate. Moreover, such a role seemed at variance with the heuristic purposes of the study and might <u>inevitably</u> lead to a view of 'gangs' in terms of 'structure' and organisation. There seemed a need to maintain a certain detachment from the phenomenon.[2]

> "The conclusion...on the role of the complete participant... is that for the vast majority of studies the observer is well-advised to structure his role...to include explicitly the concept of researcher..."

At the other extreme, the role of 'complete observer' appeared equally limiting as an approach because of the obvious dangers of misunderstanding the observed. In addition, the absence of interaction with the informants would be totally inappropriate for a study based on meaning and symbol. However, Gold does stress that, of the four field work roles, this is almost never the dominant one. Accordingly, there were occasions when I was a 'pure' observer, but care was taken to avoid attaching undue importance to such incidents and to verify them from other findings.

1.R. Gold:'Roles in Sociological Field Observations': PP.30-39 in G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op. cit.
2.G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op. cit. P.43.

The two remaining approaches ('participant-as-observer'/'observer-as-participant') formed the basis of the role adopted in the field, each complementing the other. Thus, where possible, I did participate in activities, for example, 'hanging about' on street corners, visiting the 'pubs' and 'discos'. On the other hand, there were informants who were visited and interviewed once or twice in an unstructured fashion, perhaps in the 'pub' or in their home. In these circumstances, the role adopted was that of 'observer-as-participant' and the information gained was a useful balance to the more 'intense' and descriptive data gathered 'on the streets'.

Having outlined my general role, it is important to describe also the particular method of presentation used in the field. Dean, Eichhorn and Dean[1] suggest that the researcher needs a 'plausible explanation of the research', to present himself honestly and, at least initially, to have a readily understandable routine of fact-gathering. McCall and Simmons point out that the acceptance into a role often depends on 'appropriate auspices' and 'appropriate sponsors'.[2]

As is implied by the length of time spent in the field, great care was taken to avoid upsetting the status quo and, for the main respondents, considerable time was devoted to establishing an informal relationship so that questions would be seen as conversation and not interrogation. New contacts were told that material was being gathered for a book about teenagers, their interests, and how they spent their spare time. This was so that the boys would not think my only interests were 'ganging' and violence, thus perhaps exaggerating these topics to the exclusion of the backcloth of everyday life. This proved a wise move because most contacts, once they knew that I was a friend of a 'friend', proved only too eager to talk. It would have been very easy to unwittingly, through presenting the research as a 'gang study', fuel their imaginations.

In Dundee, of course, the problem was that the role of 'youth worker' had to be rendered sufficiently 'neutral' to avoid inhibiting behaviour. This was done by minimising controls and meeting the boys in a variety of situations, not just in the Coffee Bar. There was an unwritten 'rule' that outside the Bar, they were 'free'; I was just another 'friend' and made no attempt to control their behaviour, or

1. Dean, Eichhorn & Dean:' Establishing Field Relations':PP.68-70 in McCall & Simmons: op. cit.
2. McCall & Simmons: op. cit. PP.28/29.

exaggerate it. Of course, their perception of the role of 'youth worker' still existed and may have biased action and discussion, but this was not evident.

To conclude, this point is best made by pointing out that the Coffee Bar finally closed because this strategy appeared to work too well. The groups using the premises became unable to see my role as that of 'representative of authority' and when, finally, because of fighting and danger to life and limb, a stand had to be taken (as employee of the Corporation), the boys saw this as a betrayal of the code that 'mates don't grass' - I called the Police - and, for the first time, I was seen as a 'youth worker', an 'outsider', and not the friend I had seemed.

Recording.

Though a neglected point, it is obvious that any information gained was subject to the distortions of memory - this proved a constant problem.[1]

> "The greatest problem is....the time interval between observation and recording."

The obvious solution, to take notes on the spot, proved impractical because of the reactions of the boys and the nature of many of the situations observed. Strauss[2] suggests that notes should be made at the latest before going to bed and this advice was generally followed, although occasional very late nights meant that sometimes the spirit and the flesh were both weak. However, where humanly possible, recordings were made immediately after the event.

An allied area was the filing system, which it might be useful to outline briefly. A full chronological field diary was kept in tandem with a series of topic files which were constantly re-arranged to follow the emerging pattern of research. Thus, based on initial theoretical orientations, topic files, such as 'Gang Culture', with sub-files, 'Bravery/Leadership', 'Look after your Mates', 'Safe Violence', and 'Territory', were set up and relevant information was indexed to the field diary and placed in them.

There was no attempt to force information into this framework and, where necessary, topics were reshuffled and redesignated to make sense of the phenomenon. Thus, the filing system was open-ended and

1.A.V. Cicourel: op. cit. P.46.
2.A. Strauss et al:'Field Tactics': PP.70-72 in McCall & Simmons: op. cit.

responded to the data.

Interviewing Problems.

Although this was basically a participant observation study, interviewing in various forms proved as important as 'participating' in incidents. It has already been briefly pointed out that the extended, one-off unstructured interview was used to supplement the central data-gathering methods, but no mention has been made of the difficulties encountered in this area. McCall and Simmons suggest three main threats to interview data.[1]

"1. The reactive effects of the interview situation upon the received testimony.
2. Distortions in testimony.
3. Reportorial inabilities of the interviewee."

Dean, Eichhorn and Dean[2] supplement this by suggesting that fruitful informants for intensive interviewing would include informants especially sensitive to the area of concern and more-willing-to-reveal informants. This advice proved useful in identifying when and whom to select for intensive interview.

As for dangers to the validity of the interview data, it was found that even a long-standing relationship was liable to bias and the only solution proved to be a constant comparison between interview statements and real attitudes, as observed in the field. For example, it was found that several of the boys attempted in the interview situation to give answers that they thought would 'please' me. In other words, in spite of our assumed 'good' relationship, my appearance, speech and background stamped me as middle class and they responded accordingly. Other informants would stress, indeed exaggerate, their involvement in violence to try and make my book 'more interesting'.

Another continual problem was that many of the subjects were very reticent when they felt they were being asked questions in any context outside of normal, incidental conversation. This meant that I was forced to be directive but, at the same time, to contain this direction within reasonable levels and to constantly assess the situation for bias. For example, the line of questioning might ignore certain crucial areas that the subject might know about but not feel confident enough to suggest.

Interviewing then was useful but only insofar as its inadequacies

1. G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op.cit. P.104.
2. Dean, Eichhorn & Dean: PP.142-4 in McCall & Simmons: op. cit.

were counterbalanced by the other methods of obtaining data which have already been described. As the main method, it would inevitably have led to bias and distortion, probably in the direction favoured by the interviewer.

Problems of Inference and Proof: Data Quality Control.

Of course, this appendix has in general terms been an attempt to show my awareness of the possibility of bias and to describe the form which the research took and some of the problems that arose. Each section has thus essentially been concerned with data quality and the processes of inference and proof. However, a brief statement drawing together some of the major points might prove a useful summary.

Thus, the suggestion has been that in a participant observation study of this kind, a continual assessment of the nature and degree of possible contamination of data is most important. This applies to every aspect of method - the structure of the sample, the role adopted in the field, interviewing techniques, and so on. McCall and Simmons make this point quite nicely - it may be useful to know the technical details of particular methods, but, ultimately, it must be shown in each study that they are being applied adequately.[1]

> "Most Social Scientists accept the utility of the fundamental techniques - observation, interviewing, and document analysis. What remains to be established in a given study.....is that these techniques were adequately employed i.e..... systematically, comprehensively and rigorously."

This has been the aim of this section and the reader should now be in a position to make up his own mind about the systematic nature of the ethnography. Suffice it to say that, in my opinion, the detail and conclusions are included on the premise that, over a considerable period of time, and in varying situations, they are, at least plausible, stable and consistent, and, at best, a realistic interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

1.G.J. McCall & J.L. Simmons: op. cit. P.77/8.

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Note.

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2. Adrian Mellor: Theories of Social Stratification.
4. Stuart Hall: External Influences on Broadcasting.
5. Stuart Hall: The 'Structured Communication' of Events.
6. Roland Barthes: Introduction of Structural Analysis of the Narrative.
7. Stuart Hall: Encoding and Decoding in the T.V. Discourse.
8. Dave Morley: Industrial Conflict and the Mass Media.
9. Dave Morley: Reconceptualising the Media Audience.
10. Marina Heck: The Ideological Dimension of Media Messages.
11. Stuart Hall: Deviancy, Politics and the Media.
12. Bryn Jones: The Politics of Popular Culture.
13. Paul Willis: Symbolism & Practice: The Social Meaning of Pop Music.
14. Clarke & Jefferson: Politics of Popular Culture: Culture & Subcultures.
16. Stuart Hall: The Hippies - an American 'Moment'.
17. Jefferson & Clarke: 'Down These Mean Streets' - the Meaning of Mugging.
18. Clarke & Jefferson: Working Class Youth Cultures.
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21. Dick Hebdige: The Kray Twins: Study of a System of Closure.
22. Tony Jefferson: The Teds: a Political Resurrection.
23. John Clarke: The Skinheads and the Study of Youth Culture.
24. Dick Hebdige: Reggae, Rastas & Rudies: Style and the Subversion of Form.

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26. Richard Johnson: Peculiarities of the English Route.

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30. Andrew Tolson: The Family in a 'Permissive Society'.

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